EPHESIANS

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EPHESIANS:

The Heavenly Calling and Walk.

BY H. P. WELTON, D.D.

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PREFACE

The present volume is not intended as an exhaustive exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians. It consists of the substance of a series of discourses given from the pulpit in an ordinary pastorate. The object has been simply to bring out in their order some of the leading truths contained in the epistle for the instruction and spiritual edification of Christians and Bible students. They are published at the solicitation of some who listened to them. The quotations from Scripture are from either the King James, or the Revised Version, as seemed best in each case. If this little book shall help some of God's dear children to a better understanding of the rich things which are contained in this wonderful epistle, the sole purpose will be accomplished.

H. P. WELTON.

Toronto, Sept., 1905.

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EPHESIANS:

The Heavenly Calling and Walk

Part I.—The Heavenly Calling.

Section I.—God's Sovereign Purpose and Work, Chap 1:1-14.

IN the prison cell at Rome, guarded by Roman soldiers, in the year A.D. 64, sat an old man; the marks of years of hardship are on his face, and many scars from stoning and scourging upon his person. He is engaged in writing a letter. Looking over his shoulder we read the opening words: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus." There was born this epistle, which for nineteen centuries has been the inspiration and delight of countless thousands of God's people.

The letter was sent by the hand of Tychicus, a devoted disciple and servant of the Lord, who with Onessimus, was starting on a journey to Asia. It was probably not for the Church at Ephesus alone, but to be read in several churches. The words "which are at Ephesus," are not in the older manuscripts. This is the epistle we are now to study.

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In coming from Galatians to this epistle we seem to enter a different atmosphere. It is no longer the region of conflict and contest with perverters of the Gospel, but a calm meditation upon the deep and profound truths concerning the heavenly calling of the Church. The sphere into which it takes us is above that of Galatians. In Romans and Galatians we have the foundation truths of the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ, who died for us and rose again. But when we touch Ephesians, we are lifted into the very presence of God, and from the exalted height of "heavenly places in Christ," we get for the first time a view of the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God as seen in His eternal purpose and plan of redemption.

Into this sphere we enter as we take up this wonderful epistle. May God grant that as we go through it, the "eyes of our heart" may be opened to take in the vision in all its fulness.

1. The Salutation (vs. 1, 2):

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.— Though confined in a Roman dungeon, and perhaps in chains, here is a divinely commissioned officer of the royal court of heaven. An apostle is "one sent" and commissioned to speak with authority. The commission carries with it divine inspiration. He is not left to speak his own thoughts, or to make the least mistake in the choice of language in which to clothe them. The utterances of the true apostles of Jesus Christ are as reliable as those of Christ Himself, and they deal with far higher and deeper things than the prophets of old, or even the Lord Jesus Himself ever taught—the things which they then were "not able to bear."

To the saints.—And who are the saints? No word in Scripture is more misapplied than this. The Church of Rome makes saints only of those who are dead, and of these only a very few. Certain ones, after having been dead a certain time, because of supposed distinguished piety or service to the Church, are by authority of the Church, canonized and made saints by men. According to Rome, there are no saints on earth, and never were; they are all in heaven, a privileged few.

Many who reject this, apply the word to the very holy ones, who have overcome all traces of the flesh, and are perfectly sanctified.

But according to the Word of God, the saints are all the people of God on earth. The word means "holy ones," or "sanctified," but the holiness which constitutes them saints is not a righteousness or character attained, for there are none such on earth. Their holiness is that which they have in Christ, and as this is made good to everyone who believes, the weakest as well as the strongest—therefore the sinner, the moment he is joined to Christ by faith, is a saint.

We reject the teachings of Rome, and yet we are perpetuating their errors when over the pages of our Bibles we put the names of "St. Matthew," "St. John," "St. Paul," etc., and when we speak of the disciples as saints, to distinguish them from all believers. This is Romanism. Let us refuse to sanction the heresy by using their terms. Never did the disciples use it as a special title. They were saints—but so was every man and woman and child who believed. This letter is addressed to the saints; even to those whom he had to exhort to put away lying and to steal no more.

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And faithful in Christ Jesus.—These were not a class among the believers, but as distinguished from the unbelieving world. If, therefore, you have put your faith in the Lord Jesus, all that is in this epistle, is addressed to you as a saint, and faithful one in Christ Jesus.

2. The Portion of the Saints (v. 3).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

The portion of the saints of this dispensation consists of spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in distinction from temporal blessings in earthly places. Israel's portion under the law was the latter. Thus in Deut. 28:3-5 we read "Blessed shalt thou be in the city and blessed shalt thou be in the field; blessed shalt thou be in the fruit of thy body and in the fruit of thy ground, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and increase of thy kine: blessed shalt thou be in thy basket and in thy store."

Spiritual blessings do not appeal to the natural man. He very much prefers the temporal, which to him seem so much more tangible and practical. He can understand real estate, and city blocks, and farms and cattle and crops and stocks and bank accounts; but spiritual blessings are vague, and heavenly places are some unknown region. They will do to talk and sing about on Sunday, but for him he says: "Give us temporal blessings in earthly places."

But these are so fleeting; no sooner are they well secured than life is over, and we leave them; and death is dreaded as the greatest horror, because it snatches one away from the only blessings he knows anything of, and the more of these blessings he has secured, the greater is the calamity of death.

But spiritual blessings are not vague or unreal. There are multitudes who can tell you how real they are in this life, and there are greater multitudes who have gone beyond into the presence of the Lord, who, if they might speak to mortal ears would tell us that they are the most gloriously real things that exist.

But these blessings are "in heavenly places." Where is this? What is the sphere of the portion with which the Father hath blessed the saints? As this epistle has much to say about heavenly places, or the heavenlies, we will do well right here, to stop and learn what is meant by this. It is not heaven—except as it reaches into heaven, and includes the blessings there. It is rather heaven let down to earth. It is the sphere into which the saints enter in this life, when they are born of the Spirit, and it becomes real to them just in proportion as they live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit

In the flesh we have to do with things of sense,—things which we can see and hear and feel. By the new birth we are introduced into a new world. It is the world of spirits; God is there, the angels are there, and we are there, and it becomes real to us by our faith. It is there we have communion with God; we enter there whenever we *really* pray,—this is why we close our eyes in prayer, to shut out the world of sense and leave us free in the heavenly places. There is where we always worship, for we can worship nowhere else, and "God is seeking such to worship Him." There we feed upon the Word, We enter as babes, as we enter the natural world, and we shall remain babes there, unless we use in the heavenly places the spiritual means of growth.

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Satan and the demons are there, as we shall
Chapter VI. And there is the field of spiritual warfar
victory. My friends, the heavenly place is some
tremendously real, though it is not touched by any
senses, which can communicate only with coarse m
Let us not imagine that by five material senses w
communicate with all real things.

The heavenly places reach right on into heaven
where Jesus is, and where the saints continue to liv
after the body, with all its earthly senses, ceases to
If we are Christians, and are living the Christian l
all, we are living in the heavenly places. "Your
hid with Christ in God"—not that it is dormant, bu
den from the world, who "receive not the things
Spirit of God neither can know them, for the
spiritually discerned."

Such are "the heavenly places." And there are
spiritual blessings"—which are the portion of the s

3. Election and Predestination. (vs. 4-6)

This is here introduced as the moving cause o
"all spiritual blessings" with which the Father "
blessed us"—It is "*according as He chose us in
before the foundation of the world.*"

I am well aware that these words will fall harsh
many ears. Man will not have it that God shall have
thing to do or say as to what the issue shall be, or
any fixed purpose or plan, till He shall see what m
going to do. Let us not make any apology for
much less deny or explain away the plain words o
Holy Ghost, who here makes a clear statement o
sovereign purpose and plan of God in the work of hu
salvation. Our place is simply to receive His Word

present it in its most obvious, and only possible meaning. If you reject it, your controversy is with God, and not with us.

We are in the habit of thinking of the plan of salvation as an after-thought—a scheme to remedy an evil which had come in as a surprise to God, and which interrupted His plan, and set back the accomplishment of His purpose. We think of our individual salvation as having its inception when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But here we find that in the mind of God, it antedates creation. Before the world was called into being, or even a star sparkled in the heavens, when God was alone in the universe, His first thought was for the saints. He had them all numbered, and knew every one, and they were the objects of His love and choice, before He put forth the first stroke to build the material universe. He "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

And all His after-work was in furtherance of His plan of redemption. It was for that He founded the world, to be the scene of the consumation of His plan for the chosen saints; and it will never reach its prime purpose till in a coming age the glory of God fills the earth, and the tabernacle of God is with men. Creation and redemption are parts of one great plan.

But some one will say, "What about those who are not chosen?" I have nothing to say; we must not say more than is written, but only speak of what it has pleased God to reveal. Why God chose you and me and not some others; or what he saw and foreknew that entered into the decision whom He should elect, I know not, and to try to explain it, would be only idle conjecture. Let us be content to know, and praise Him

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for His boundless grace, that we who believe are for any reason among the saints whom He "hath blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and also that this is "according as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world." And let us go and spread His invitation, given in all good faith to the world, "whosoever will let him come," and "him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out."

For what were we chosen? "*That we should be holy.*" The word "holy" is the same as the one rendered "saints" in verse 1. "That we should be saints." This is how saints are made; not canonized by the church years after they are dead, but chosen before the foundation of the world. Some of us are very poor saints, as were some of them, and often you hear a Christian say: "I don't profess to be a saint." You should not profess anything, but if you do not *confess* that you are a saint, you deny your calling.

"*And without blemish before Him.*" As we are chosen "in Christ," so we stand in His righteousness, and before God are spotless.

Then follows predestination. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption as sons.* This differs from election, which designates the persons chosen, while predestination determines their rank or position. And what is the position to which they are predestinated? "Unto the adoption of sons." Many see in both election and predestination, only salvation. The words are neither of them used here in that sense. Election is to sainthood and holiness in Christ; predestination is to the rank of sonship.

We have seen, in Gal. IV, that "the adoption of sons," means, not, to make them children, but the raising of

minor children from the place of servants under tutors and governors, to the place of full grown sons, set free from the bondage of law, and clothed with the "*toga virilis*," the token of the liberty of manhood.

And all this is "*according to the good pleasure of His will.*" Let us not imagine that anything is due to us, that we are chosen to be saints, or designated to the rank of matured sonship, but let it be "*to the praise of His glory which He freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved.*"

4. The Present Stage (vs. 7-10).

Having shown the beginning of God's purpose, he passes over the ages down to the present time, and shows what we now have as a present experience. And, first of all, *we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.* Before anything else can be done, it becomes necessary that all sin should be put out of the way. This introduces the cross. Here the work of God begins, and here begins also the Christian's experience. The first thing that confronts the mind of one who begins to think of his future well being, is his sin; and never will he make any progress till he knows that this is forever disposed of. Hence the Gospel is the first good news, because it announces that this is done, and that through the blood of Christ, he has redemption, the forgiveness of sins. This should be clearly seen, before attempting to advance.

Then follows our introduction into the knowledge of God's purpose and plan—the mystery of His will (vs. 8-10). *Which He hath made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence* (intelligence), *having made known unto us the mystery of His will.* Did it ever occur to you what tremendous truths are given to us when we are taken into the counsel of God? And the wonder is that plain, un-

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learned men can grasp them. We are often startled at the clear knowledge of truth that some uneducated people display. It is because grace makes them to abound in the knowledge of His will. Paul gives thanks for the Corinthians "that in everything you were enriched by Him in all utterance and all knowledge." And Christ gave thanks to the Father, "because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

This knowledge of His will takes in things to come—*Unto the dispensation of the fulness of times, to sum up all things in Christ.* No knowledge of His will is complete that does not include the final heading up of all things in heaven and earth, in Christ, who shall be the center and administrator of all.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance. The saints being in Him, are by His grace made joint heirs with Him to all things, so that it is true that "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Such is the place of the saints in the purpose of God.

5. The Sealing (vs. 13, 14).

Having selected us before the foundation of the world, and predetermined our future rank as sons of God, and having redeemed us by His own blood, and made known to us His eternal counsel, and given us a joint heirship with Christ, He last of all sets upon us the seal, which binds the transaction as eternal.

A seal has a threefold force. It is a sign of ownership; it is a ratification of a transaction—giving it authority and causing it to take effect; and it is a pledge of its protection and execution. Says Prof. Findley: The seal "is a bond between God and man; a sign at once of what we are and shall be to God, and of what He is and will be to

us. It secures, and it assures. It stamps us for God's possession, and His kingdom and glory as our possession."

The seal is affixed, not when we were chosen, nor when we were redeemed by His blood, but when we "heard the word of the truth of the gospel . . . and believed." The seal waits for the agreement of both parties to the transaction.

And this seal is no outward mark, visible to man. It is the mark upon the heart, seen only by its fruits. It is the indwelling Holy Spirit, which is given to all who believe, and becomes an experience to all who receive Him. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4 : 6). "The Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are the sons of God" (Rom. 8 : 16).

And finally, the seal is the "*Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.*" It is the first instalment of that which we shall receive in its fulness, when the work of God in us is consumated at "the redemption of the purchased possession."

Thus is completed this most wonderful single sentence (vs. 3-14), beginning with the first inception of the purpose of God in eternity past, and reaching to its consumation in the dispensation of the fulness of times, "unto the praise of His glory." And all this is the work of God alone, according to the counsel of His own will. There is left no room for our work or merit. The only thing for us to do is, having heard of it, to believe and trust. God does all the rest. These are wonderful realities. Let us endeavor not to make them true, but to apprehend them as facts.

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Section II.

The Apostle's Prayer for the Saints, Chap. 2:15-23.

HAVING given utterance to the great truths of the preceding section, the apostle pauses to record the prayer which naturally rises in his heart for the saints in view of these things. The prayers of Paul for the various churches to which he wrote, and the conditions which called for them, offer an interesting and helpful line of study. The immediate cause of this prayer, as he says, was that they had "heard the word of the truth of the Gospel of their salvation," and had believed, and were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." He knew that the great things of which he had spoken were theirs. He does not, therefore pray for their salvation. But he knew also that it was one thing to believe these things to be true, and quite another thing to have a realizing sense of them in their experience. How conscious we are of this. We assent to the great truths of the Gospel. We do not doubt them, but how little do they impress us. We sometimes wonder that we are not moved by their overwhelming importance. This prayer comes very appropriately at this point to meet this need. Let us join our prayer with it, that it may be answered in us, as we examine its various petitions.

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1. Prayer for Spiritual Eyesight (vs. 17, 18).

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened.

Intellectual knowledge is not enough. The philosopher and the scientist labor hard and long to gather from nature its facts. They study the structure of the earth; they turn their eyes to the heavens to discern the size, distance and movements of the stars, and tabulate the results for the use of mankind. But these are cold facts, they do not move the heart.

So we may study the great facts of God's purpose and plans in redemption, and accept them, and be able to explain them to others, but they do not bring forth fruit in our lives and experience. We have only seen them with the eyes of the mind. But when the Spirit of God opens the eyes of our heart and we begin to contemplate them from the standpoint of our spiritual nature, then "the *spirit* of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him," takes possession of us, and we have a realization of them in our experience. Without this, the great truths of grace soon lose their force, by reason of familiarity with them.

How often we read over the wonderful truths which in ages passed have stirred the souls of thousands upon thousands—truths which caused the martyrs to rejoice with exceeding joy in the midst of the fires of persecution, and yet they fail to move or touch us, even though we believe them thoroughly. Sinners become what we call

"Gospel hardened"—and the saints become "truth hardened," and the faithful preaching of the Word falls flat on both, and there is no spiritual fruit.

Even after we have heard the Gospel and believed, we need a further work that we may *know* them. John wrote his Gospel that we might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and believing, have life through His name" (John 20:31). But later he wrote a letter "unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). It is one thing to have eternal life by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; it is another thing to *know* by an experience in the heart that we have life.

This was the burden of the apostle's heart for those who had believed and were sealed. And so he prays that the eyes of their heart might be opened, that they might catch "the *spirit* of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Why is there so much coldness and formality in the churches? Not necessarily because the truth is not known and believed; but because the eyes of the heart are not enlightened. This prayer of the apostle is needed to-day.

2. Some things that should be known (vs. 18, 19.)

He next specifies some things that he would have them know. *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling; and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints: and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, . . . which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.* Three things are included in this petition:

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(1) "The hope of His calling." The calling i
consists in our election to sainthood, our predestinatio
sonship, our redemption through His blood, and our s
ing with the Spirit of promise. Now what is the hop
this calling? We speak of hope as of some uncer
thing which we desire. We often hear one say,
hope I'm a Christian : I hope my sins are forgiven, a
hope I shall go to heaven when I die." But this is
the hope of His calling. The hope of the Gospel is no
uncertain thing. The word is never used in that sens
the Scriptures. It always refers to a certain, defi
object, which is to be realized in the future, and whic
to be the consumation of our desire and expectation.
is the fulfilment of the promise. It is as sure as anyt
in the past or present. It is simply future. "Hope
is seen is not hope : for what a man seeth, why dotl
yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not,
do we with patience wait for it," (Rom. 8 : 24-25).

This hope is the end and purpose for which we
called ; it is the consumation of the eternal purpos
God, as set forth in the previous section. It is, tha
the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all thi
in heaven and earth are headed up in Christ, we s
enter upon our inheritance, and share with Him
throne and His glory. This they had already been
should be their portion, but his heart goes out in ear
prayer for them, that their hearts might be opened to
it in and realize it as a certain thing. Beloved, we
know these things ; but if they took hold upon our he
as living realities, what kind of people should we
How would they transform our lives, and make us app

as we are, not of this world, but heavenly beings sojourning on earth.

(2) He prays also that they may know "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Not only have we obtained an inheritance in Christ, which is the hope of our calling, but He has also an inheritance in us. We are "His purchased possession"—for the redemption of which, He eagerly waits. It is a most marvelous thing that the mighty Son of God could have a personal interest in such creatures as we. We can understand how His infinite love and compassion might lead Him to provide a way whereby we might be saved. That might come from His pity for our lost and miserable condition. But having saved us, and brought us to heaven—as "brands, snatched from the burning," He surely could not place a personal value upon us. But here we are let into the secret of the great loving heart of our blessed Lord. Not only has He in mercy saved us—and for [illegible] would praise and serve Him forever—but so precious and valuable are we to Him, that he speaks even of "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." It was because He saw the value to Himself of such "possessions," that long before the foundation of the world, He set His heart upon us, and chose us for Himself, and He has been working out the plan of our redemption ever since.

This is made to appear in many ways. We are "the pearl of great price," which our Lord, as the "Merchantman" found in His search, and to purchase it, "went and sold all that He had"—(Matt. 13 : 45-46). It is through the Church that in the ages to come, He is to display before "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God" (chap.

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3 : 10). By His mighty power He made the earth and se
the stars in their places, and ordered their courses
and they have been the wonder and delight of His creature
in all ages. Surely "the heavens declare the glory of Go
and the firmanent showeth His handiwork." He pro
nounced these "very good"—but there was nothing in
all that appealed to, or satisfied His heart. Creation
not His inheritance. But those whom He loved an
redeemed with His own precious blood, He so prizes as t
call them, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance.
The apostle prays that our hearts may be able to kno
this.

(3) The third thing He would have us know is, "th
exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believ
. . . . when He raised Him from the dead." There wa
something more than a display of divine power in the ac
of God when He raised up Christ from the dead. It wa
indeed a mighty manifestation of power, before which th
world may stand aghast, and behold it in silent wonde
But there was more ; there was the "exceeding greatnes
of His power to us-ward"—which is only revealed by th
Holy Spirit to faith. The apostle's prayer is that th
hearts of the saints may be enlightened to know this. A
this forms the theme of the remaining verses of this se
tion, we turn to the next division for its elucidation.

3. The Exaltation of Christ (vs. 20-...).

In order that we may see what was the meaning
Christ's resurrection to us, the apostle first pictures th
wonderful exaltation of Christ Himself in that act. *Whe
He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His ow*

right hand in heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet.

The power that thus exalted the Son of God is the same that is behind the mighty work of our salvation. Indeed, the exaltation of Christ is but one feature of the work of salvation. It was for this that He died and rose again. It is "the power of God to us-ward." Let us therefore come near, and look at this mighty putting forth of divine energy.

In Joseph's tomb lay the dead body of a man. He had been known in life as the son of a carpenter. He had been executed as a criminal, and buried after the custom of the Jews. Men said it was the end of a wild career, the entire failure of all His claims as a religious leader. His followers had scattered to their homes, and none expected they would ever rally again. The quiet Sabbath was observed while He lay in the tomb.

But no sooner was it over than God began His mighty work. He came, and regardless of the guards, and the seal of Rome, He opened the tomb and took the body and put back into it the life that had been sacrificed, and showed Him alive by many infallible proofs and to competent witnesses during forty days; then in the sight of a company of men, took Him from earth to heaven. They saw Him rise, as if drawn by some higher attraction, to His own natural sphere, until he passed the bound of human vision, into the heavenly places. As He enters the world of spirits, they gather to receive Him with royal honors. But He pauses not in His course. Passing

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beyond angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, He rises above all rule in heavenly places, as He had passed the rule of Cæsar at Rome—"far above all authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come." He stops not till He reaches the highest throne in the universe, and is seated "at the right hand of the Majesty on high," with all things put in subjection under His feet. That is the utmost limit of all possible exaltation, beyond that there is nothing. And there He is to-day—the same Man in the same body that lay in the tomb, the son of the carpenter—the Son of God, waiting for the appointed time, when He shall come forth to assume control of this world, and fill the earth with His glory, and reign in righteousness and peace. Oh, the mighty power that could do this! And this power is "to us-ward who believe." He was not raised and exalted for Himself alone, but such was God's care for us, that He took that dead body of Jesus from the tomb, and thus set Him at His own right hand, as a part of His plan for our salvation and exaltation.

4. The Head of the Church, His Body (vs. 22, 23).

How the exaltation of Christ is the power of God to us-ward, is set forth in these last verses of the section: *gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body.* Here the saints are presented in a new relationship. In the former section they were seen as separate individuals, but here they are gathered into one body—the "Ecclesia," a called-out company, united to the exalted Christ, so as to form the body of which He is the Head.

And this is the Church. How much controversy has been waged around that word. What claims have been made by various organizations and systems, to the exclusive right to use the name; and what authority has been assumed, in that name, over the life, the conscience, and the faith of men, and all because they failed to see the true nature of the Church. The Church is not an earthly organization, with officers and forms and machinery. It is a heavenly thing; it exists in heavenly places; its life is there; all its worship, its fellowship, its spiritual exercises, its blessings are there. It is the body of Christ, and like its Head, its sphere is the spiritual realm. Being united to Christ, its unity is evident. There is but one Church; it can neither be formed by man, nor can man divide or unite it. We hear much talk about Church union, as if the uniting of earthly organization could make the Church one, or fulfil the prayer of Christ. Let the real unity of the Church as the body of Christ be recognized, and let the life from the one Head permeate all the members, and the matter of the union of earthly organizations becomes the merest incident.

Since the Church is the body of Christ, no Christian lives unto himself. He is related to all other Christians, as the hand to the rest of the body. A member of the body severed from the other members, dies at once. So would a member of the body of Christ. Life depends upon unity.

And since the Church is the body of the glorified Christ, it shares His honor, His rank, His glory. "As He is, so are we in this world." The power of God to usward when He set Him at His own right hand, far above all ranks of heavenly beings, consists in that He raised all

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the members of His body to the same place of honor
glory. Such is our rank now, and there we shall b
person, when His work is completed.

And finally, the church is "the fullness, (or completn
the 'pleroma') of Him that filleth all in all." A h
without a body is no more complete than a body with
a head. And so there is no complete Christ without
Church. It is written of Him, "As the body is one
hath many members . . so also is Christ." (1 Cor. 12:
The Christ then that was raised by the power of Goc
His own right hand, is the glorified Jesus, together w
all the saints who form the completness of His body.

Such was the power of God to us-ward, which
apostle earnestly desires that the saints may know,
for which he prays that the eyes of their heart may
enlightened, that they may realize it in all its fulne
May that prayer be answered in each of us.

Section III.

The Divine Method of Saving Men.

Chap. 2:1-10.

WE come, in this section, to the consideration of a most interesting and important passage, as it deals with the method and ultimate purpose of God, in human salvation. In the closing words of the last section, we saw the Church lifted with Christ to the highest place in the universe—even to the throne of God, as the body,—the completness of Him who filleth all in all. From this, the Apostle, as by a sudden transfer of thought, returns to earth, to consider the earthly condition from which these exalted ones were taken, and God's method of doing the great work.

The first words are significant,—*And you* —. Our translators have tried to supply the ellipsis by inserting the words, borrowed from a later verse,—"hath He quickened"—or "did He make alive." (R.V.) But these words are not in the original text, as the italics show. If we believe that the words are inspired, then we must also believe that the omissions are no less inspired; and we will do well to pause and ask what is the meaning of the omission.

Coming down from the dizzy height, where he had just

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seen the Church as the fulness of the risen and glo
Christ, to the depths where grace found us, the chan
so unspeakably great that he can only exclaim, "
you !" Yes even such as you, are the present share
this exaltation. He then proceeds to describe the pr
by which the mighty work is done.

1. WHAT THEY WERE :—OUR STATE BY NATURE (vs.

When ye were dead through your trespasses and
This is no mere figure of speech. He does not mean t
that they were in danger of death. They were dea
not by means of their trespasses and sins, for it was
these that caused their death ; it was rather their d
that caused their sins. The meaning is, that it was i
spect to trespasses and sins that they were dead.
utterly insensible were they to all spiritual life, that
did not appear to be sin. They could recognize som
the grosser forms of crime and immorality and injus
towards their fellow men, but as to the sin of disobedie
to God, and disregard of His righteous claims, it had
place in them. It is an awful mark of deadness,
men can sin with ease. If we were fully alive, we sh
shrink back in horror from every wilful disregard to
holy will of God.

And this condition of death is the natural state o
all. Spiritual things make no impression upon us,
awaken in us no interest. We are very much alive
the world of sense. We can talk fluently of business
politics, of social affairs, and even of the externals
religion. But when the subject is the inner life,
relations to God and the life to come, we are sil

There is nothing in us to respond to these things. We turn them off and say: We are practical people, we deal with facts and not fancies; we live in this world, we know about material things, all else is vague, uncertain, unreal. "The natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto Him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually descerned," (1 Cor. 2:14). This is the condition of death in which the world is found.

He then points out the principles which control the natural man. *Wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world.* The life of the natural man is in the trespasses and sins and is in full accord with the spirit and methods of the world; He falls into its current, and is borne along by it, adopts its principles, lives for its ends and uses its means. His whole life is absorbed in some of its schemes; he never stops to ask what is the purpose of God in this world, nor what is the will of God in his life? These things form no part of his thoughts or plans. It is nothing to him that God say:—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world," (1 John, 2:15-16): nor "that the whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5:19); nor that "the world passeth away and lusts thereof." In the face of all this, he gives himself up to the world, and willingly becomes a part of it, he moves with it, seeks his pleasures, his honors, his rewards in it. His walk is "according to the course of this world," regardless of the certain end to which it is carrying him.

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To this the apostle adds :– *According to the prin*
of the powers of the air. This clause contains a mo
fearful truth,—one which is the least thought of, or t
most indignantly spurned by the lovers of the world. T
follow the course of this world, is to live in full acco
with Satan the arch enemy of Christ. He is repeate
called the god and the prince of this world, in whom
lies. He is also the prince and leader of a inumerable h
of wicked spirits—demons—to whom he has giv
"authority,"—and through whom he rules and administe
the affairs of the world during the present age. The
wicked spirits are here called, "the powers (authorities)
the air," because they have their abode, not on the ear
but all about it, and fly hither and thither, under t
leadership of their prince, of whose will they are made t
executors. It is for this reason that the common symb
of these spirits is "the birds of the sky" or "the fowls
the air," as in the parable of the sower, and elsewher
The fact that we are living in an age that is under su
dominion, and under the influence of such beings explai
many phenomena that are otherwise inexplicable.

This, the apostle adds, is *the spirit that now worke*
in the children of disobedience. In Paul's time—and
less in ours—the ruling spirit of this world is not of Go
nor is it of man. Among all the many influences th
make up the current of the affairs of this age, the o
predominating spirit is that of which he is speakin
He does not say it is one of the influences, but "the spi
that now worketh." The spirit that now has undisput
sway "in the children of disobedience," is the "prince
the authorities of the air." When we came to the closi

section of this epistle, we shall meet these agencies again in their relation to the saints, whom they persistently oppose and with whom we have to contend. But here it is the world whom they dominate. This is a sad picture, to follow so soon after the glorious vision of the exaltation of Christ, and His body the Church, but it is the inspired representation of the character of the age in which we live.

In the next verse he speaks of another aspect of the unregenerate life, to show that while Satan denominates, the natural man voluntarily chooses the course which is set before him, *Among whom we also all lived once, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the the mind.* This is the experience of everyone, "In the lusts of the flesh." Whatever the carnal nature craves for, he lives to obtain. The sensual appetites are supreme, and the great object of life is to find means to meet their demands, and enjoy the world as he passes through it. Anything that offers pleasure to the body or mind is sought after and eagerly pursued.

This does not necessarily mean that he lives in open sin, or unrestrained carnal indulgence. He uses some degree of reason. He knows that certain restraints are necessary to the greater enjoyment of life. He believes that "honesty is the best policy." A curbing of the grosser appetites, and a culture of the social and intellectual part of his nature, gives a better standing in society and honor among men, and larger success in business and every worldly ambition. Therefore he chooses a moral, upright, honorable, and often even a religious life, while all the time he is "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Let none be so deceived as to think that because

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he can say, "I am not as other men," and because conscience approves his moral integrity, and religi observances, that he is not therefore living "according the prince of the powers of the air." All these thi may be in the line of "the desires of the flesh and of mind."

Paul confesses that he himself was governed by principle before his conversion. He includes him when he says, "Among whom we also all once live But was not Paul a good man? Does he not say: any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he mi trust, in the flesh, I more, ... as touching the rig eousness which is in the law, blameless'? Yes, Paul all that a good and moral and religious man could be, yet he says, "We also all once lived in the lusts of flesh and of the mind." That is, our lives, like those the immoral were controlled by our own desires and i nations, and were not subject to the will of God. Thi the one test that determines the character of every m and woman before God.

There is yet one thing more that marks the nat man: *And were by nature the children of wrath, the rest.* It is not man's outward acts of sin tha him under the divine displeasure. God looks deeper t these, at the source and cause of these acts, which only the symptoms. The seat of the disease is in nature. A nature that is so self-willed that in the face of known will of God, it can make the chief end of its bei to gratify the desires of the flesh and the mind, must d forth the holy wrath of God, even though those sel desires lead to moral lives. The controlling principle is

is the same "even as the rest," whose selfishness leads them to grosser sins. All alike are exposed by nature to the divine wrath, and for the same cause.

This does not conflict with God's love. In fact it is the love of God that intensified His wrath. The wrong deeds or the perverse disposition of your child whom you love and care for, stirs your heart to deeper indignation, than the same evils in others, in whom you have no interest. It is the wrath of love.

Thus we have set before us the sad and awful picture of what man is in his natural state. It will be well for those who glory in the dignity of manhood, and his wonderful achievements, to read carefully this passage. It is the divine estimate of man's character, and the experience of every candid soul assents to its correctnesss.

2. How God Saves (vs. 4-7).

This bring us to the marvelous work of God's grace for such as have been described. The trouble with those who complain of God's injustice towards His creatures, is that they stop too soon. They read His expressions of wrath, and say, "Such a God is not a God of love." They should put with it what His grace has done for the children of wrath. From the last verse, we should expect to read of some dreadful manifestation of His holy wrath. But to our astonishment and delight, we find the next words to be: *But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead in sin.* So there was something else in the heart of God besides wrath. There was a richness, a wealth of mercy, and a love that was great. And this mercy and love outstripped

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and overwhelmed His holy indignation, and began a mighty work to save even those who are dead in sin, and willing subjects of Satan's dominion.

And what does it do? First it brings the dead to life. *Quickened us together with Christ.* The first great need was life for the dead, and so by grace He caused the same life that came into the dead One in Joseph's tomb, to flow to the members of His spiritual body, causing the souls of the dead in sins to waken to life with Him. But the work does not stop there. Not only is there a new conscious sensation of life within the soul, but he is introduced into a new standing and sphere. *And raised us up together, and* ——. Oh the wonderful mercy, love and power of God! *made us sit with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Already we find ourselves back again where we were at the end of the last section, where we saw the Church as His body, "far above all rule and authority and power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age, but also in that which is to come."

And this was done when He raised up Christ. By that mighty act of His power, we were given our standing in Christ, so that in Him we are already seated in the heavenlies. The working out of this in us, begins when we put our trust in Christ, and are quickened into actual spiritual life; it will be completed, when, in our glorified bodies we take our place with Him on the throne of His kingdom. Then "we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John, 3 : 2). This is the method by which grace saves "the children of wrath."

But why has He done this? First of all, as we have seen, it is because of the wealth of His mercy, and

greatness of His love. But this is not all. We are told in verse 7, that He had a purpose beyond—and we may say, included in this. It was for the glory of God through the eternal ages. *That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us.* One of the results of our salvation will be to cause the angels to utter the praise of our Redeemer and Savior through eternal ages. John in his Apocalyptic vision saw the angels in countless multitudes joining with all creation in ascribing honor and glory and blessing to the Lamb that was slain. Such will be the consummation of His work of salvation.

3. It is All of Grace (vs. 8-10).

The remaining verses of this section are to show that the work is His alone, and is all of grace, and not of works. Twice does he affirm this. When speaking of the first step in the work—our quickening from death—he stops to say in parenthesis, as if eager to keep it to the front, "By grace are ye saved."

And again in connection with the completion of the work as it is displayed to the wondering universe, he repeats: *for by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* It is not the faith alone that is the gift of God. The original will not allow this interpretation. The gift of God is the whole work of salvation, including all the details. To strengthen this he adds: *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* This reminds us of the strenuous language of Romans and Galatians, where he insists so forcibly that human works play no part in salvation. Grace from its very nature, cannot

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be joined with works. We have been tried under once, and utterly failed. Now God will not allow u have the least part in the work. If we are to be s now, we must keep our hands off. He will not con that the law system, which is the system of works, which has entirely failed to save even one, shall be allo again to enter into the matter in the least degree. man shall be permitted to boast of anything he has done. If there was one small thing that we could do a part of our salvation, even the lifting up of the fin we would boast that we "we did our part." But in ages to come, when the angels, who are studying interest, the work of human redemption, shall praise exceeding riches of His grace," they shall not be allo to give any part of the credit to us. He alone is wor who

> ". . . . first contrived the way,
> To save rebellious man,
> And all the steps, His grace display,
> Who drew the wondrous plan."

On the contrary: *We are His workmanship, create Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God before prepa that we should walk in them.* Go into that factory and that wonderfully contrived machine, built and adapted the work it was made to do. It is turning out spler work in the most perfect manner. You admire the s of the machanic who could plan and make all the parts the machine, and put it in place, so as to execute s excellent work. It is his workmanship. You praise builder, but you do not praise the machine—except a displays the ability and skill of its maker. It had no p

in its own construction. It is simply the workmanship of another. All that it is, and all that it is able to do, is the pure, unaided work and plan of its maker, who, out of cold, dead and powerless iron, made the beautiful machine, and fitted it for the work that was given it to do.

"We are His workmanship." Out of the dead and powerless material—"the children of wrath"—He produced living, spiritual beings, possessed of His own life, which He put into us, and set us in place, "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and gave us power to work, and prepared the work for us to do. We shall receive praise for the faithful work done afterwards, but for our salvation and exaltation to the throne of Christ in heavenly places, never shall we be able to point to one thing we ever did. "By grace are ye saved." Grace took us from the place of death in sin, from the grasp of the "prince of the powers of the air," and from exposure to the wrath of God, and first gave us life, and then raised us with Christ, and seated us with Him in heavenly places, and made us the riches of the glory of His inheritance," that through the ages to come, we should be to the praise of His glory, and all that, before He gave us any work to do. Having done this without our aid, but only "through faith," which simply believes, and trusts Him for it, He then introduces us to the work which He also has prepared for us to walk in. Such is the divine method of salvation, as set forth in this section.

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Section IV.

Forming One Body, and House of God.

Chap. 2:11-22.

EACH section of this wonderful epistle presents some new display of the grace of God in His work of redemption. In the last, we saw the sinner raised from his place of death in sin, and the dominion of his own depraved appetites, and from bondage under the prince of this world, to the right hand of God in heavenly places, to show to an admiring universe in the ages to come, "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." Now he turns to another aspect of the work, in which we shall see Him gathering the scattered materials from among all nations and classes and conditions of mankind, and from these forming the body of the one new Man; and also building them together into a temple, to be a dwelling place for God.

1. FAR OFF:—MADE NIGH (vs. 11-13).

The apostle would not have them forget what they were, that the hopeless condition in which they were found might ever remain as a background on which to

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display the grace of God that raised them. *Where* *remember that, ye being in time past Gentiles in the f* *who are called uncircumcision by that which is called* *circumcision in the flesh, made by hands.* There is doubt that in time past it meant very much to be a J The advantage of the Jew was "much every way." alone of all people and races of the earth was in coven relation with God. Back of the law was the coven with Abraham and his seed, which was without conditi and included all earthly blessings to them as a nati and through Christ the spiritual Seed, all heavenly ble ings in Him. But the Gentiles were outside of They had no claim upon God. They could not refer t single promise, or any word of hope that had ever b made to them. It was only in Israel that a Saviour v promised. Salvation was of the Jews. They bore seal of circumcision which marked them as sharers in covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed f ever. To them alone the prophets had been sent ; w them alone God was in communication ; to them alo He gave His law, and the ordinances of grace, and forms worship ; and of them Christ had come. All was of Isra and for Israel.

The Gentiles are reminded that they were *aliens fr* *the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the co* *nants of the promise, having no hope and without God in t* *world.* And what was true in Paul's time, is true to-da The heathen world is here described. But this sad cond tion is not confined to those we call heathen. The sam is true of those in Christian lands, who though they he the Gospel and are familiar with its terms, are yet wit

out faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a most dismal situation. Think of a ship far out in mid-ocean, without a pilot, without a chart, and without a rudder, the boundless sea ever rolling by. The ship is headed for no port, has no mission to fulfill. Those on board have no expectation of ever reaching land or home. They have simply to drift aimlessly about, whithersoever the changing winds may drive them, till in some storm they go down to a hopeless grave.

So it is with the aliens from God, and from His covenant. The world is their sea, ever moving—never at rest. They are in the midst of it, with no God to watch over and care for them, with no pilot to direct their course, no chart to show whither they drift. They exist absolutely without a mission or a purpose, and without hope for the future. They live on thus aimlessly, trying to amuse themselves from day to day for a few years, till old age, or more probably some disease or accident puts an end to life, and they go down and out of sight, and into outer darkness forever. We may say what we will of the noble lives, and high ideals of those who though not believers in Christ, have done much to help the weak, and lift up the fallen, and make life happier while it is passing; yet any purpose or mission which ends with life on earth—which has not for its consumation, a glorious eternity through the only possible way, which is faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life—is to be without God and without hope in the world. Let us not forget from what we were saved.

But now in Christ Jesus, ye that once were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. A great change has

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come over their condition. Their aimless, godless hopeless life is over. They are inside the fold, and in lowship with the people of God; they have come under provision of the Divine covenant; they have an objec their life, a mission worthy of their nature, a hope makes the future bright and attractive. They are "m nigh."

But mark how they were made nigh. By what me was this great change accomplished? It was by no ef of their own. It was not by reforming their lives, or the adoption of new and better principles or entering up the pursuit of a nobler and worthier purpose. Th things are good and have their place, but they can ne bring sinners nigh to God. The apostle states distinc that they "are made nigh by the blood of Christ." T alone has done it. The sacrificial death of Jesus Chri has put mankind into new relations with God, by remo ing the barrier which separated them, and bridging chasm. It was sin that alienated man from God. It sin that separates the heathen from Him to-day, and th separates the sinner in Christian lands from God and fr peace and hope. But the blood of Christ has remov this. "He hath once appeared to put away sin by t sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. 9 : 26). That work was do on the cross, and by that the "far off" were "ma nigh." Let us never imagine that we are nigh to G because of our improved lives. Every moment of fello ship that we have with God, and with His people; eve service we are permitted to render; every enjoyment His watch-care in the vicisitudes of life; every experien of peaceful rest in Him; and every throb of joyful hop

and anticipation of glory to come; all are ours solely by virtue of the blood of Christ. He alone did the work. We heard the glad news of its accomplishment. We believed and accepted the new relationship into which it brought us. We therefore gladly draw near in fellowship and worship and faithful service, because we were made nigh by His blood.

II. The One Body:—The New Man (vs. 14-18).

Being made nigh to God, they are next made nigh to each other, and established in peace and unity. The world was divided into two classes, Jews and Gentiles. The emmity between these was bitter, and the separation was complete. They formed two distinct types of humanity. The begining of their estrangement and hostility was the choice of Abraham's seed as the people of God, and the giving to them of the law, which made their mode of life entirely different. By the very nature of their calling, the Jews could have little in common with the Gentiles; and on the other hand, the Gentiles came to hate the Jews with intense hatred. This has been manifested in all ages. First Israel persecuted, and made war against the Gentiles, driving them from their land which God had given to His chosen people, and had commanded them to go in and possess it. And later the Gentiles oppressed Israel, and drove them again from their land, and persecuted them in all lands whither they were scattered. But back of all this was a deeper hostility, inspired by Satan, that of the natural man against God.

The apostle now proceeds to show God's method of bringing these two elements together, and both into

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closer relations with Himself, and so establishing pea
This cannot be done on the ground of either the J
or the Gentile. The Gentiles were not to become Je
and adopt their laws and ceremonies ; nor were the Je
to go over to the position of the Gentiles. He rath
establishes a new position for both. He sets up a n
standard. *He is our peace who hath made both one, a*
hath broken down the middle wall of partition. He gathe
Jews out from their Judaism, and Gentiles out from th
heathenism, joining both to Himself, so *to make*
Himself of twain, one new Man, so making peace. T
new position is outside of both Jews and Gentiles.
forms a third great division of mankind, and now we ha
"the Jew, the Gentile and the Church of God." Th
last is the new Man.

In order that in this new Man there might be perfe
harmony and peace, and *that He might reconcile both un*
God in one body, it was necessary that all existin
barriers should be destroyed ; and so Christ first of all dea
with these. *Having abolished in His flesh, the enmity*
even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.
that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by th
cross, having slain the enmity thereby. Thus in the ne
Man all causes of estrangement and bitterness betwee
Jew and Gentile, and between both and God, are foreve
done away. Thus we have God's way of making peace

The mission of Christ was not to revive and restor
Judaism, nor was it to reform and save the nations o
their own ground. He will do that for both when He
comes again to set up His visible kingdom on the earth.
He will then deal with Israel and the Gentiles as such.

But His work in this age is to gather out of all nations the third body, in which no traces of former distinctions shall appear. In this body there is "neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free." All distinctions of birth, ranks education, culture, sex, or whatever in this life separate, mankind into classes, are lost, and all are merged into the unity of the redeemed, into one new Man—the Christ.

How different is this reconciliation from that of man's highest ideal. Man's way is to bring humanity together on the basis of the natural man, and a common creation is the link by which he would unite the race into one. And so we are hearing much of the new gospel, which multitudes honestly accept as the very essence of Christianity: "The universal brotherhood of man, and Fatherhood of God." It makes the brotherhood of man mean simply a common origin, and the Fatherhood of God nothing more than a common Creator. But this would of necessity include in the same family, all the lower and the lowest animals.

The time has not yet come for God to deal with His material creation, which "waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8 : 19). The brotherhood that is now being formed is of those who have been reconciled by the cross, by which Christ abolished all that hinder, fellowship with God, and with each other as His childrens and so making peace in one body, which is the new Man—Christ and the Church.

This is the peace which He came and preached *to you which were afar off; and to them that were nigh.* And it is the duty of the Church, in His name, to make known to the world this method of reconciliation and the new re-

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lationship into which men are brought by the cro
Christ. We are called to be the heralds of peace.
is Christianity.

III. The Building of God (vs. 19-22).

This section of the epistle reaches its climax i
closing verses of the chapter. Here we have the
and highest destiny of the church. It is not simply t
saved and brought nigh to God, though that is enoug
fill our mouths with joyful praise forever; nor is it sin
to be brought into the blessed fellowsh[illegible] the brot
hood of saints, whose fellowship is "so [illegible]ith the Fa
and with the Son, Jesus Christ," t[illegible]gh this again a
to the exaltation and glory of our salvation. It is, in
dition to all that, to be made a house, a dwelling plac
God himself, a temple, even a holy of holies, a "habita
of God." *Being built upon the foundation of the apos
and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief co
stone, in whom each several building fitly framed toge
groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also
builded together for a habitation of God through the Spi*
Such is the Church which is being constructed from
gathered materials.

The variety of aspects of the work of God is alm
infinite. That which we have been looking at as a n
Man, appears now as a building—a temple. But it is
same thing. There we were taught the fellowship of
saints, and here the purpose of God to form for Himsel
sanctuary, for His own indwelling.

But we see in this passage that this building is pe
liarly and strangely constructed. It is formed of ston

every one of which is a complete building or temple in itself. Such is the meaning of the words, "in whom each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple." To the Corinthians Paul wrote: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Cor. 6 : 19). The reference there is to the individual believers. God by the Holy Spirit dwells in the person of each believer, as truly as He did in the temple at Jerusalem. The body is the outer court; the soul is the holy place; and the spirit is the holy of holies. In this inner sanctuary God manifests Himself in His glory, which shines out through all the other parts, and sanctifies them. These temples are "living stones," which are built into the great temple, which as one building forms the "habitation of God."

Not only so, but each local assembly of believers gathered into one place for fellowship, worship, and service, and which constitutes the local Church, is a temple of God. It is not possible for the whole Church of God on earth to meet together, so as to manifest the unity that exists; therefore God recognizes the local assembly as a representative of the whole, and in a peculiar manner manifests His presence—"where two or three are gathered together in My name."

But not only are the individual believer, and the local assembly temples of God, but also these are all builded together into one great house, which will appear in all its magnificent splendour in that day, which was typified in the dedication of the temple of Solomon. When the last of the living stones shall be put in place, and the whole is

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complete, than shall the glory of the Lord come upon, fill the whole house.

As the various pieces that are put into a house in construction differ in form and use, so that they show resemblance to each other, and yet each is needed in place for which it is intended and fitted, so do the ind dual stones which make up the temple of God, differ fr each other. Every peculiarity of personality or exc tricity is used of God to fill a place in the whole. Let not try to be alike; let none try to make himself another. Let each be himself, assured that God has m him what he is, to fit the place He has designed him fill. Only is it necessary that each should be yielded to the purpose of the great Architect.

Since each stone in the temple is a temple in itself shows in what diverse temples God can dwell. He take up His abode in all the diversified characterist which mark the dwellers in all parts of the world, and all grades of social or national life. But while the ston of the temple of God may differ, one thing is essential that each shall be a temple, and himself indwelt of God

And what is true of the individual, is true also local assemblies. There are as many different kinds Churches, as there are of individuals. It is a mistake insist upon uniformity of Church organization, or metho A Church composed of the educated, cultured and wealth citizens of an enlightened land, will need one form a order, and a Church composed of the illiterate and unciv ized will need quite another; and between these there w be needed a variety of forms. It is for this reason th

the Holy Spirit never gave us a form of Church organization, or rules of order.

How then are we to test the Churches to determine which we shall fellowship as Churches of Christ? There are many calling themselves Churches, which should not be received or recognized as such. The apostle gives us the test of a true Church,—"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (New Testament prophets) Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." Any Church, whatever may be its form of organization or mode of worship, which takes nothing for authority but the inspired words of God's appointed teachers—the apostles and prophets—and which bows submissively to all such teaching, casting aside all traditions of men, and human creeds as having any binding force,—and which builds itself on the one foundation of Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, is a Church of Christ. But any so-called Church which substitutes for the Word of God, the opinions or reasonings of men, or which denies the absolute integrity or divine authority of the Scriptures, whatever may be its form or historical association, forms no part of that temple which is being "builded together for a habitation of God." Men may differ honestly, and with equal loyalty of heart to the truth, in regard to Scripture interpretation, as we are not yet made perfect in wisdom and knowledge; but there must be oneness of Spirit, and equal acceptance of the one foundation. So long as there is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same divine standard of truth, it is matter of smaller importance that there should be visible unity, or uniformity in details. There will ever be "diversities of gifts," and of "administra-

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tions," and of "operations, but is the same God
worketh all in all." It is thus that the one true Ch
"groweth into a holy temple in the Lord."

Section V.

The Mystery of the Church.

Chap. 3: 1-13.

IN the preceding chapters the apostle has sought to fix attention upon the unity of the Church, as seen in its completeness. The work of God is seen in its far-reaching and comprehensive aspect. It is not simply God dealing with and saving an innumerable company of individuals, but as gathering these scattered materials into one, and forming them into one great temple to be filled with His glory.

At this point the apostle is about to utter the prayer that is on his heart for them, that they might be strengthened and fitted for the exalted position to which they had been called by the grace of God. And so the present section opens with the words: *For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ in behalf of you Gentiles* ————, and here he suddenly pauses. The Spirit who inspired his writings, leads him, before recording that prayer, to interpose a passage concerning the mystery of the Church. Thus the section which we are now to examine forms a parenthesis in the course of the thought of the epistle. Therefore, while we wait for the prayer which was upon his lips, and which will follow later, let us listen to the unfolding of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in this mystery.

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These digressions often occur in the writings of
as if his soul was so full of the truth that when he w
pour it out in order, it overflows in unexpected places
the order is broken into, as in this case. But never
the apostle indulge in such digressions, that he does
give us, by the Spirit of God, some peculiarly prec
truth from the divine storehouse. So we shall find it

1. The Mystery of the Church (vs. 2-6).

Turning suddenly aside from what he was abou
write, he says: *If ye have heard of the dispensation of
grace of God which was given me to you-ward, how tha
revelation He made known unto me the mystery, as I w
afore in few words*

The word "mystery" (μυστήριον) has a meaning so
what different from that in which we use it. It does
mean something vague, or perplexing, or hard to be
derstood. It means something which is unknown,
which can never be found out till revealed directly fr
God. It is a truth or fact that is beyond the reach
human philosophy or science or reasoning, till God choo
in His own time and manner to make it known. Wh
thus revealed, it is clearly understood.

There are many such truths, but among them the
are seven, which stand out prominently in the New Tes
ment, and are definitely called "mysteries." These ar
first, "The Mystery of the Kingdom" (Matt. 13:11), t
progress of the affairs of the kingdom during the rejecti
of the King, or the present age; second, "The Mystery
Israel" (Rom. 11:25), the period of blindness that shou
come upon them till the fulness of the Gentiles be come i
third, "The Mystery of Godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16), th

divine incarnation; fourth, "The Mystery of the First Resurrection" (1 Cor. 15:51), the change of living believers; fifth, "The Mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:7), the development of the Antichrist; sixth, "The Mystery of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots" (Rev. 17:5); and seventh, "The Mystery of the Church," with which we have to do in this section of our epistle.

Of the nature of this mystery he says he had already written "in few words." In the previous section he had already spoken of the Church as the fulness of Christ. He now tells us that this is a mystery, *which in other ages was not made known unto the children of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.* (See also Rom. 16:25, 26.)

And what, definitely, is this great mystery? It is expressed in verse 6: *That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ.* The original expresses this with even greater definiteness. It is "that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs, and joint-members of the body, and joint-partakers of the promise in Christ."

We must not confound this with the promises of God concerning the Gentiles as such. The Old Testament is full of predictions of coming blessings to the Gentiles. It was made a part of the promise to Abraham, that the whole world should be blessed through the blessings that were to come to his seed. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," was a promise well-made to Israel, and the prophets abound in references to it. But it was nowhere predicted that a new body should be formed, in which both Jews and Gentiles should be so united that they should, without any advantage arising

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from former relations to God, be joint-heirs and joint-p
takers of the promises made to Christ, who is the
heir of all things.

Let us not confound two things that are vastly dif
ent. National blessings to Israel, and through them
the whole world, are promised throughout the Old Tes
ment. That is one thing. But spiritual blessings
heavenly places to Christ and His body the Church,
quite another thing, and these were hid—not in t
Scriptures, but "in God," and there "kept secret sin
the world began."

In the past age God's blessings flowed to the wo
through the channel of Israel, His chosen nation, and in
coming age this will be true again. Then shall all natio
of the earth be blessed through the blessing that will co
to that people. But in the present age the divine blessi
flows to the world from Christ the Head, through H
body the Church. In this the Jew has no advantage ov
the Gentile, nor the Gentile over the Jew. It is not tha
Gentiles are brought over to Judaism, to share in Israel
blessings, but a new body is formed. This is the myster
of the Church.

We see ho far astray are many of the commentarie
in which this mystery is defined to be "the salvation o
the Gentiles," or "the admission of Gentiles to salvation."
That was never a mystery, nor was it ever kept secret
The Old Testament abounds in the revelation of God's
purpose and plan for the salvation of the Gentiles, But
the mystery here spoken of is something "which was kept
secret since the world began, but is now made manifest"
(Rom. 16 : 25. 26).

2. Paul's Apostleship and Commission (vs. 7-9).

When the time had come to make known this mystery, a new agency was introduced through which to reveal it. For this, Paul was called to the apostleship. Thus speaking of the mystery he says: "*Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God which was given me . . . that I should preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God.*

This passage presents to us the distinct and peculiar character of Paul's apostleship, which differed from that of others. To him was committed the gift, or grace, or dispensation, of receiving and communicating this mystery of the Church. It was first revealed to him, and preached only by him. The other apostles were commissioned to preach to the Jews, to show them that Jesus was the Messiah for whom Israel looked. Peter was the head of the apostleship to Israel. It is true that Peter first preached the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius, but he simply made known to him that God would receive Gentiles who believed, into Israel's fold. He never touched upon the nature of the Church. But Paul went much further, and proclaimed the truth, that the Church of God, the body of Christ, was something outside of both Jews and Gentiles; and that to belong to it the Jew was called out from Judaism, and the Gentile from the nations, to form in Christ a new Man. This is what Paul calls "my gospel."

Therefore Paul's apostleship was distinct from that of the twelve, in that he was the apostle of the Church. As the Church was an extra body, not known in Israel, so

the apostle of the Church was an extra apostle, and
counted with the twelve.

It has been customary to regard Paul as the twel
apostle, who took the place of Judas, and to say that
choice of Matthias by the eleven was without divine sa
tion, and that he was never recognized as an apost
That this is a great mistake, the following facts will sho
It is definitely written in Acts 1 : 26, that "he was nu
bered with the apostles." After that, and before the co
version of Paul, the apostles were always spoken of as t
twelve, whereas before, and after the fall of Judas, th
were called the eleven (Matt. 28 : 16; Mark 16 : 14; Luk
24 : 9). On the day of Pentecost, after the choosing
Matthias, it is written: "But Peter standing up with t
eleven," etc. (Acts 2 : 14). Evidently there were eleve
with Peter, and Matthias must have been reckoned amon
them. But more positively still, Paul, speaking of th
appearances of Christ after His resurrection, says
"And that He was seen of Cephas, and then *of th*
twelve" (1 Cor. 15 : 5). As this was long before Paul'
conversion, the twelfth could only have been Matthias.

Thus it appears that the whole number of apostles wa
thirteen. The twelve represent Israel. It is Israel's num
ber everywhere. They were the apostles of the Messiah
and were His witnesses to Israel, but Paul was the apostl
of the risen and glorified Christ.

He was not only an extra apostle, but was also the
chief of the apostles, because he was commissioned to
receive and make known the highest truth ever revealed
to man. Since he is the apostle of the Church, all the
distinctive Church epistles were written by him. These

are the epistles to the seven churches, from Romans to the Thessalonians.

Such being the nature of the apostleship to which Paul was called, it was fitting that his conversion should be by a revelation of the risen and glorified Christ, and not, like the others, by association with Him in His earthly life. It was fitting also that he should receive his commission, not through the other apostles, nor even like them, from Jesus in the flesh, but from Christ in heaven, whom he was to represent. This he shows in the epistle to the Galatians, was the case. It does not appear that Paul in all his writings ever speaks of the earthly life of Jesus. He has only to do with the Christ in glory, from whom he is sent. As Christianity is the religion of the risen and ascended Christ, and not of Jesus, as living on the earth, Paul is therefore pre-eminently the apostle of Christianity. If any one of the apostles should stand as the head of the Church on earth, it is not Peter, but Paul.

It never ceased to be a source of wonder to Paul that he should be chosen for such a ministry. When he calls to mind what he was, he is humbled to the dust. Instead of wearing high-sounding titles to set forth the greatness of his rank and calling, he says: *Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given.* Not to the chief of the apostles, nor to the greatest of the saints, not even to their equal, nay, nor even to the least, but "unto me, who am *less than the least* of all the saints." It was to him an overwhelming humiliation that Saul the Pharisee, the persecutor, the enemy of Christ and the Church, should be chosen, and that too, while in the very act of persecution, to be its chief apostle. But such is grace. We may any of us wonder that we have any part at all in

the fellowship of the blessed hope and service. But lik
Paul, while we magnify His grace which chooses "th
base things of the world," let us joyfully accept our calling
and never let our former state hinder the fullest partic
pation in our privileges, or the faithfulness of our service

3. The Final Purpose (vs. 10-13).

The end in view in the mind of God in all this is nex
set forth: "*To the intent that now unto the principalities
and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known
through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.*" Paul
never stops short of the final outcome in his discussion of
the work of God. He sees, not simply its bearing on con-
ditions in this life and the visible world, but also its rela-
tion to the ages that are yet to come, and to the hosts of
invisible beings who inhabit the heavenly places.

The "principalities and powers" are the ranks of
celestial beings who inhabit the invisible world. They are
intently occupied with what God is doing on earth. It is
not simply the completeness of the work as it will appear
in the coming ages that interests them, but "now," in the
present stage of development, they are watching its pro-
gress. When they consider their own glorious state in
which they "always behold His face" and delight to
"do His pleasure," they must wonder what God can make
of such creatures as we. But they are learning as the
work progresses. They see Him taking some from homes
of culture and refinement, and some from the haunts of
vice and degredation, and some from the wilds of Africa
and India, and beginning with each one at the same
place, renewing them by the Spirit through the Word,
and gradually developing the new creation for a place of

honor and glory far above their own in His kingdom. And so God is instructing, by means of the Church, and by means of each individual in it, these glorious beings "in the heavenly places" concerning "the manifold wisdom of God." If they shouted for joy over the completion of creation, what will be the mighty roar of praise that will fill the heavens when they shall behold the mystery of God fully developed in the completion of the Church as the body of Christ, and sharing with Him His throne?

It is to this intent, we are told, that He is now making known through Paul the mystery of the Church. The angels do not know all things yet, but through us they are beginning to learn something of God's eternal counsel, "according to the purpose which He proposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The section closes with an appeal to them not to lose heart at his tribulations for them. Since we are made the means of instructing the angels of heaven, as well as being prepared for the glory that awaits us, we need not be discouraged or cast down if we are called to pass through some trying places, for we know that not a thing can ever happen to one of the saints that is not a part of the divine work for him, or for some others through him. Paul reminds them that all he suffered was for their sake. He did not lose heart, and they should not.

With this the parenthesis closes. Shall we not praise God that the apostle was led into this digression, since by it we are let into another of the secrets of the wonderful counsel of God?

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Section VI.

The Apostle's Second Prayer for the Saints.

Chap. 3:14-21.

In this section the apostle resumes the thought whi was upon his heart in the first verse of the chapter. *F this cause I bow my knees unto the Father.* The exalt calling of the saints not only calls for praise, but sends hi to his knees in earnest prayer for them. To that pray we now give our attention. And notice here, as throug out the epistle, the absence of anything that is simp local. It applies, not only to the Churches of Asia in t first century, but to Christians of the twentieth centur even to every believer who reads these words. Also r member that this is not only the prayer of Paul; it is t prayer of the Holy Spirit who inspired it,—it is t divine intercession for the Church.

1. Strengthened and Indwelt (vs. 16-17).

The first petition is: *That He would grant you accor ing to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthene with power through His Spirit in the inward man.* Th members of the body receive strength by union with th head. The hand is a useful member, but of itself it ha no power to move. It is only as power comes into from the life centre that it begins to act and to do th will of the head. So the first petition is that the severa members of the body of Christ may be energized wit spiritual power to fulfill the mission for which they wer called.

But the definite thing for which strength is asked is: *that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* That as the Church is "builded together for a habitation of God," so each one may be a temple of God and indwelt by Christ. The truth that the Church is the house of God, is only of value and power to us, as it becomes an individual experience. It is true that Christ is in every one who is born of God: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." But it is one thing to have Christ in us as a presence, and quite another to have Him abiding, or at home there. We often pray that Christ may "come in and be our honored guest." Of course we own the house, but desire His presence to bless it. But if we are the house of God, then Christ is Himself the proprietor. He does not come to be entertained in the parlor and excluded from the work-rooms where the house is managed. The prayer of the Spirit is that Christ may come into His own abode; that we may turn over the whole building to Him, and be His honored guests, or His servants to do His bidding. It is no small thing to surrender our body and soul and life into the hands of Christ as we would deed a house to one who has purchased and paid for it. But this is His right. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price?" (1 Cor. 6 : 19-20).

It may not appear at first why we need so much strengthening with power to make it possible to let Christ thus dwell in us. But your own experience will explain it. You are willing and glad to receive Christ as a guest, or even to live with you, and give you counsel and help, but when it comes to turning over the management of everything to Him, is there not just a little feel-

ing of dread and fear lest He may use it for some pu
pose you had not consented to? He may disregard son
of your cherished plans; He may call you to self-deni
and suffering. And so when the matter is presented
giving up the key, or throwing open the door and a
mitting Him as proprietor of His own temple, you fin
yourself without power to do it. You say, "Lord, b
Thou my guest, let me have Thy presence and fellowship
I cannot do without these; take possession of some of th
rooms, but let me have the management of the others.
Therefore the need of the prayer that we "may b
strengthened with power through His Spirit that Chris
may dwell in your hearts."

And this is a gift, "That He would grant you, accord
ing to the riches of His glory," to be thus strengthened
Like salvation, it is free, but also, like salvation, it is t
be received "through faith." Faith appropriates the
Spirit with His power to welcome the Master to His own
temple.

This is a very definite experience, and something more
than salvation. Those for whom the apostle prayed were
already saved. They were redeemed, forgiven, adopted,
and made members of His body, and yet he prayed that
Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith. In these
days there are not many such, yet it is not presented as
something reserved for a few, but as the normal condition
of the whole Church. The Spirit of God contemplates
nothing less for each one, though, alas! how far short of
it is the experience of the Church. The words of Adolphe
Monod on this passage are in place here: "Alas for us if
this language, infinitely below the reality which is in God,
should be infinitely above the reality which is in us. . . .

To pass from Scripture to our experience seems like a fall from heaven to earth - not to say, sometimes, to hell. . . . May the Lord teach us how to bring our experience into harmony with His promises."

2. COMPREHENDING THE LOVE OF CHRIST (VS. 17-19).

The second petition is very comprehensive. *Being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.* As the tree gets its life and strength and fruitfulness by sending its roots deep into the earth, so the apostle prays that we may be rooted in God's love to us. This is necessary to all that follows. Unless we are resting on the love of God, and drawing our life and nourishment daily from Him, we shall never be able to comprehend anything of the greatness of that love.

"Comprehend with all the saints." It requires all the saints to comprehend the love of God. No one alone can know it. He can only know so much of it as applies to his own conditions and needs. Some one has discovered that no two persons ever see the same rainbow. The rainbow is formed by the sun's rays falling on the drops of water and being separated into their component colors, and so passing to the eye. And as two persons cannot stand in exactly the same place, therefore the rainbow that each one sees is formed by different rays, falling on different drops, and so each one has his own rainbow, formed for him alone.

The love of God is like the light of the sun. It falls on the separate raindrops of our personal conditions and needs—our trials and our sorrows, and these give it the

form that suits our peculiar needs. We know the lov
God only as it is expressed to us. It perfectly meets
case. But there are as many other cases as there are sai
No two are exactly in the same position, or have the sa
needs. But the love of God is perfectly adapted to e
one. Therefore it takes all the saints to comprehend
love of God.

But even all the saints cannot take it all in, fo
"passeth knowledge." The love of God is not exhaus
even by all who have ever lived or ever shall live. Wh
all the rainbows have been formed for all the people w
see them, there is yet an unmeasured flood of light w
unnumbered rays going out from the sun, through u
versal space. So the love of God is infinite, and throu
the endless ages of eternity, we shall be continuallly d
covering new manifestations of its exhaustless stores.

> "It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
> My Jesus, Savior; yet this soul of mine
> Would of that love, in all its breadth and length
> Its height and depth and everlasting strength,
> Know more and more."

3. Filled Unto the Fulness of Christ (v. 19).

The next petition grows out of this. *That ye may*
filled with all the fulness of God. This includes, not onl
the love of God, but all that makes up the completeness
(the "pleroma," the same word used in chap. 1 : 23) o
Himself. It puts at the saints' disposal all the infinit
attributes that make up the fulness of what God is –Hi
wisdom, truth, righteousnese, wealth and power.

But how can we take in or contain such infinite re
sources? We cannot; only the Infinite can do this. Bu

we can be filled with it, and this is the prayer. You cannot receive into your house or make use of all the water that fills the reservoir of the water-works, or that is in the lake from which it is supplied, but you have it all to draw from for every need. You have only to turn it on till your vessel is full. So we have back of us all the infinite resources that make up the fulness, or completeness of God, and we have only to turn it on, by prayer and faith, to meet every possible requirement of our body, soul and spirit, that may arise in life or death or eternity. The prayer is that we, knowing the love of God, and our infinite resources in Him, may so appropriate by faith from the fulness of God, that there shall not be a want in any part of our being, that shall not be fully and constantly supplied.

4. God's Ability to do all (vs. 20-21).

This wonderful prayer closes with a doxology, in which he gives praise to God that He is able to do all, and more than all these things. Such tremendous things have been revealed thus far, that the mind is almost dazed as it tries to even think of them. Therefore he reminds us that it does not depend upon our power to ask or even to apprehend them. *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* How this enters into every possible need. It assures us that no exigency of our present life can possibly arise, that He is not fully able and ready to meet. Do you sometimes think you are asking of Him too much? Does the enemy suggest that you must not expect the great God to be concerned with your petty troubles? To answer this, we have his

strong language concerning what He is able to
He does not say simply that He is able to give all we a
nor even more than we ask, but "abundantly mor
The word means "more than enough." If the meas
is full, it is called enough; but here it overflows,—it
more than full. But he does not stop with that, but sa
—"exceeding abundantly;" even the overflow of
measure is copious—excessive. Not only so, but
even enlarges the cup which we bring, and says that
overflow is "above all that we ask," and to include a
adds—"or think." Thus does the infinite God underta
to do for all the saints.

It is one of the qualities of the Almighty, that He
able to come down to the minute things of our lives.
who formed the worlds also made the invisible insect, a
gave attention to the details of its organism, and car
for the maintainance of its life. And He is able to ent
into the little affairs of the life of the humblest sain
And so we have an Almighty Father who is able to supe
abound towards all our needs now and forever.

The first part of the epistle closes here with the do
ology in which we heartily join. *Unto Him be glory in th
Church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations foreve
and ever, Amen.*

Part II.—The Heavenly Walk.

Section I.

Maintenance of Unity - The Bond of Peace.

Chap. 4 : 1-6.

IN the second part of the epistle upon which we now enter, our attention is directed to the life here on the earth, which should follow such a calling. Since it has to do with our life in this world, it may seem that it should be called "The Earthly Walk." But when we examine the principles which characterize the Christian's life on earth as set forth in what follows, we shall discover that the walk no less than the calling is heavenly. The partaker of the heavenly calling walks on earth as a heavenly being. He is not of the world even as Christ is not of the world, and this should give color and tone to all that he does.

The first three chapters are called doctrinal, and the last three practical, but it is difficult to draw the line rigidly, for doctrine and practice are so blended that they cannot be separated. There is no doctrine that does not have a vital connection with the life of him who holds it; and there is no practice, that does not find its base and spring in some doctrine which is first accepted. This will appear in the chapters which we are now to study.

1. THE CHRISTIAN'S RULE OF LIFE (v. 1).

The apostle again reminds them of the condition under

which he writes: *I therefore the prisoner of the L*
Confined in a Roman prison for the crime of preaching
unsearchable riches of Christ, he calls himself the Lo
prisoner. Whether at liberty or bound with chains, h
the Lord's, and is ever seeking how his circumstances
permit him to do service. If not permitted to preach,
can serve his Master by writing to His saints, and t
stimulate them to faithfulness. Let no servant of Ch
permit his circumstances to cause him to give up his s
vice. If he cannot do what he would like, let him do w
he can. How many thousands of God's children ha
been instructed and inspired by the writings of Paul, wh
were penned in prison cells.

In the first sentence he lays down the principle whi
is the basis and rule of all true Christian living: *I beseec
you that ye walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye a
called.* It would almost seem as if it were unnecessary
write upon the Christian's walk. If the nature of t
glorious calling so fully set forth in the first part is cor
prehended and realized, that of itself would determi
what the life should be. If one were a crown prince ar
heir to a throne, that would determine his conduct. S
one who occupies the high place which we have in Chris
and who looks forward to the blessed hope that is in stor
for him, has something which should determine th
character of his life. He should decide every act b
the test: "Is it worthy of the calling wherewith I ar
called?"

Here we have the Christian's rule of life. He is no
under law, as a child or servant; he needs no commands
with penalties for disobedience, he is far above all that
He is free, being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise

and "filled with all the fulness of God"; his calling becomes the cause and inspiration of his walk.

Let it be observed also that the walk follows the calling. It is not till he had set forth in all its completeness what the believer is by virtue of his acceptance of the call, and had shown the absolute security of his position and hope, that anything is said to him about the walk. God has no word to the unsaved about their way of living. All men are by nature the children of wrath and under condemnation, and no walk will ever make any difference as to the issue. They are lost, and before anything can be said to them about a change of life they must be saved. They must first be able to say, "Who hath saved us and called us, with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:8).

The preacher must present both the calling and the walk of the believer, but let him preserve the divine order. If he speaks of grace that saves the sinner, or the exalted position to which the believer is called, it should be with a view to producing a sanctified life. If he exhorts the Christian to a godly life and faithful service, it should be that he may honor God by walking "worthily of the calling wherewith he is called."

2. Our Relation to One Another (vs. 2, 3).

We have next the application of this general principle to some particulars. And, first, the attitude of believers towards each other. *With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* The effect of a realization of the heavenly calling is to

make one very humble. It takes away all pride
sense of superiority over others, as it destroys at once
that which in the flesh makes one differ from anot
No doubt in the Churches of Asia, formed of Jews
Gentiles, there would be danger of conflict. The Je
might feel that they had superior rights that should
respected, and the Gentiles might jealously feel the
selves slighted. It would not be easy to blend su
diverse elements into harmonious unity. And so to-d
the fact that the Church must necessarily be composed
those of greatly diverse characters and conditions by
very nature of their calling, is cause of great danger
its peace. But when they realize that each one is call
as a lost sinner, whether found in the home of refi
ment and luxury, or in the haunts of degradation and si
and that all are introduced to the same standing
Christ, solely on the principle of grace, they are ma
humble and meek, and ready to forgo all personal claim
and gladly give place to others, and, what is the harde
possible thing for the flesh, they are willing to be nothin
in the esteem of others, that Christ alone may be glorifie
How much trouble and discord, and unseemly strife i
the Church would be abolished if this were the mind
all the saints.

But so long as imperfection remains in the people o
God there will be constant need to cultivate long-suffer
ing and forbearance of one another in love. Many o
those into whose fellowship we are called, and with whom
we serve, will try our patience. But let us remembe
that no doubt we too try the patience of others, and need
their long-suffering. The forbearing will ever need to be
"of one another." It will be well to think often how

long the Lord has had to suffer our perverseness and failures; and yet, in spite of all, He has made us partakers of His calling, and "the riches of the glory of His inheritance."

This must not be simply a passive attitude; it cannot be such. We shall need to *give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* It will require constant effort. If the Church would make this its diligent study, and constantly put forth its efforts to maintain the bond of peace, how many disastrous quarrels that dishonor Christ might be avoided, and the testimony of the Church be preserved. Only such an attitude towards our fellow-Christians is worthy of such a calling as that "wherewith we are called."

3. The Unity of the Church (vs. 4-6).

The apostle next reminds them, as a reason for their diligent effort, to preserve the unity of the Spirit, that the Church is one. To enforce this, he enumerates seven fundamental elements which constitute the Church and bind it together. They form the [illegible] strands in the bond of peace. *There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.* This is the true and only Holy Catholic Church. Wherever any portion of it exists, there will be found all these marks, and by these alone shall the true Church be known. It is important, therefore, that these should be well understood. Let us examine each separately.

1. There is one body. This is the fourth time in this epistle that the Church is spoken of as a body, once in

each chapter (1 : 23 ; 2 : 16 ; 3 : 5). Shall we say that t
body includes all the various evangelical denomination
No, it includes none of them. There is no visible orga
zation that can be called the Church of Christ, for there
none that includes all the members of the body, and the
is but one body ; nor is there any whose members
possess the marks which everywhere and always chara
terize the true Church. But in whomsoever these mar
are found, there is a member of the Church of Chris
The body here spoken of has nothing whatever to do wi
outward organizations, although it is something very re
and definite. Its boundary line runs between the peop
of the world and the people of God, but alas, it ru
through the midst of all human organizations, sects an
denominations. It is invisible, except as detected by th
marks described in these verses. The Church is co
extensive with the body of Christ, whose Head is i
heaven, where also are many of the members, while som
are on the earth. We are not told to keep the unity o
the body. There *is* one body. It cannot be divided. To
divide a body would mean the sure death of the severed
part. The life of every member is dependent on its con
nection with the head. This is as true of the body o
Christ as of the physical body. God will see to it that
the unity of the body is kept intact. But we are to "give
diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit," and that, too,
not in a portion, but throughout the whole body.

2. There is one Spirit. As there is but one life which
permeates every member of the physical organism, so
throughout the body of Christ, there is one Spirit, and
that Spirit is its life. But the Spirit manifests Himself in
a great variety of ways. As the life in the physical nature

manifests itself in one way in the hand, another in the foot, and another in the eye, causing each to perform the function for which it was made, so the one Spirit in the body of Christ will manifest Himself in all the various forms which make up the manifold activities of the entire Church; but it is the same Spirit in every part, which makes alive every member. This is an invariable mark of the Church. There are no dead members, for "to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7).

3. There is one hope. All the saints throughout the world, and throughout the ages, are called to the same great and glorious consummation. One object is set before them. Whenever one becomes a Christian, whatever may have been his life or character or condition before, whether he be a Hottentot, a Hindu, a Chinaman, or a cultured and titled Englishman, he begins to look forward to the same hope. He knows that if death overtakes him, he will pass out of the body, only to be "present with the Lord." But beyond that his hope reaches onward to a far more grand and glorious expectation. The day is coming when the Lord who rose and ascended to heaven will come again for His Church, and then, at the sound of the archangel's trump, his body shall rise, and in the twinkling of an eye it shall be "fashioned like unto His glorious body," and together with all the saints, he shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, thenceforth to be forever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The saints may not all see alike the blessed hope, but in one thing they are all agreed, and join heartily in saying: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He

shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see H as He is" (1 John 3 : 2). This is the "one hope," whi is everywhere a distinguishing mark of the Church Christ. This is one of the cords which bind the membe together in the bond of peace.

4. There is one Lord. This is the fourth in the seve fold bond of unity. It stands in the centre as the mo important of all. It is between hope and faith, and vital connected with both. The Lord Himself is the centr figure, in whom all unite. Without Him, none of th others would be of any avail.

But notice, it is not one Savior, or one Redeemer, bu one LORD. It is true that to all the Church He is Savio Redeemer, and Mediator; but that which chiefly forms th link that unites all together and all to Him, is that eac one, whatever is his station in life, bows in willing sub mission to Christ as Lord. And on the other hand, tha which in all ages has broken the outward organizatio into rival and hostile factions, each claiming to be th Church, to the exclusion of others, and so dishonoring th Lord, has always been the failure to bow to the supreme lordship of Christ. The result is the present divided state of Christendom, a variety of bodies, calling themselves by human names, and each seeking supremacy. But these are not the Church, for in the Church there is one Lord, and the mark of every true member of it is that he yields unqualified submission to His authority in all things, and will not consent to any other. Thus the central feature of the bond of unity, fellowship and peace is "one Lord."

5. There is one faith. If there is any one thing that marks a true Christian more than another, it is faith. By

it we are saved, by it we live, by it we walk, and it is "the victory that overcometh the world." Some have thought that the one faith here referred to is the one system of doctrine which the Church holds. There may be some plausible ground for that view, for such system of truth is sometimes called "the faith." But since each of the others in this list refers not simply to an outside object, but to something which also takes hold on the experience of each one, by which he is joined to the whole, it seems more probable that this should do the same. Therefore, we think the faith here is the same experience, or exercise of the heart that is called faith in other places.

While it is true that in the true Church there is one system of truth, yet one may hold that system and not be in the body at all. But the exercise of a personal faith, which is trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, is something that must exist, as a sure sign of membership in the Church of Christ, and cannot exist in any other.

And this faith is one. It is essentially the same in all. However men and women may differ in nationality, or color, or social position, or environment, when they become Christians there is within the heart and experience of each, the same faith in Christ, the same reception of Him as Savior, and the same rest in His blessed Word. You may find very little in some people that you can fellowship in the flesh, but if you are a Christian, you will recognize in the faith that the other has, the same thing that is so precious to you, and it becomes at once a bond of fellowship and peace. And so throughout the one body, there is one faith.

6. There is one baptism. What is this? Some will say it is the apostolic baptism that has come down to us

through the line of succession, administered by du
authorized hands, and connects the recipient with t
apostolic Church. Others will say that the one baptis
is that which is administered in the one and only tr
form, according to the meaning of the word, and t
practice of the apostles. Both alike are wrong, and
are all others who refer it to the outward administrati
of the ordinance. If you have seen nothing in baptis
but an outward ordinance, however rightly and scriptu
ally administered, you have not discovered the ver
essence of baptism itself.

What is baptism? It is a change of condition. It i
a passage from the state of death in the old nature to tha
of life in Christ; the end of the old, and the beginning o
the new; the entrance into membership in the body o
Christ, and to participation and fellowship with all th
saints in all that makes up the one body, with its seven
fold bond of peace. Wherever, and by whomsoever, an
in whatever form it is administered, it is claimed by all t
stand for this. It is true that there is a right and a wrong
method of applying the outward symbol, but whatever the
method used, if there has not taken place that for which
it stands, there is no baptism. And on the other hand,
although the ordinance may be so perverted as to lose its
symbolism, yet if the soul has passed out of death into life,
and so into the one body of Christ, there has been the one
only true baptism "for by one Spirit were we all baptized
into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). The one baptism, there-
fore, has no reference here to the outward act, but to *the*
thing for which the ordinance stands. The symbol should
show forth the thing symbolized, but the symbol is not the
baptism.

It is evident also that baptism, like all the other marks of the true Church, is not a function of the organized body. It stands for the believer's admission to the holy Catholic Church, to which all the saints belong. We do not baptize into the local Church, nor into the denomination, but "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." No human organization has any exclusive right to the ordinances, which were given by the risen Lord to the one universal Church. This is true of both baptism and the Lord's supper. There is a place for our organizations for the manifestation of the fellowship of the saints, and for the service of our Lord, but let us be careful not to elevate them to the place of the one body, nor make exclusive claim to that which belongs to the Church of Christ.

Thus the one baptism, like all the other marks, characterises every one of the saints, and is found in no others.

7. Finally, there is one God and Father. By this Christianity is opposed to heathenism, which has no end of gods. India alone has three hundred million. The Churches of Asia were in the midst of a people who worshipped innumerable gods, to whom they erected altars and temples. Therefore it meant much when Paul said to them that one of the marks of the Church was that there was one God. On the other hand, the distinguishing feature of unbelievers in Christendom is that they have no God. People who compose so-called Christian civilization worship nothing; they are verily "without God and without hope in the world." And so the Church is distinguished from heathenism and Christendom by this mark -"there is one God."

And this God is also a Father, one who loves and

cares for His children. With all the multidude of g among the heathen the idea of a God who loves His c dren is a thing unheard of. They know no god but th of hatred and vengeance. But the Christian, wherever is found, is one who has one God, and He is "over all a through all, and in all."

These are the seven things which characterise the t Church and every member of it, and which bind all gether in one indivisible unity, and constitute the fello ship of the saints. He does not say that there ought be these things; these are things that are. It is for t reason that the apostle urges them to "give diligence keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And t is not simply for the local Church, but to extend as far the one body extends. This is the unity that Chri prayed for, and this will accomplish the purpose, "th the world may know that thou has sent me." No ecc siastical unity or uniformity would ever make the wor know that.

Section II.

Spiritual Gifts—and their Purpose.

Chap. 4 : 7-16.

HAVING shown the essential unity of the Church, the apostle next speaks of its diversity, as manifested in the working of its various members. *But unto each one of us was the grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* The one life in the body manifests itself in as many different ways as there are diversities of personality in its various members. To each is a separate grace, or office given, with whatever measure of power it has pleased the Giver to bestow, the same as in the physical body. In this section, therefore, we have set before us some of these special gifts; whence they come, and the purpose they serve. We shall find here some valuable instruction concerning the practical work of the Church.

1. The Source of the Gifts (vs. 8-10).

The gifts here referred to are the Christian ministry. They are designated as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These are from the ascended Lord, and are given to the Church. It is interesting to notice how the apostle makes use of an Old Testament passage to set forth this truth. He quotes from Psalm 68 : 18.

Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Let us go back to the Psalm, and see in what connection the passage is there used.

It is said to have been written and sung on the occasion of the bringing of the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to the place appointed for it on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 9). It represents a conqueror returning from battle, and ascending the throne, bringing with him the spoils of war which he distributes as gifts to the people. The language there is: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men." We are told by those who boast of superior scholarship, and who deny that there could be any predictive prophecy in the Scriptures, that the Psalmist had here no reference to the Lord. They say the conqueror is merely some human warrior, and that the words "on high" mean Mount Zion, and "ascended" means climbed the hill, and nothing more. But Paul, by the Holy Spirit, says the Victor is the Lord Jesus Christ, and "on high" means heaven, and the ascension is the return of Christ from the place of death to the throne of God. Hear the inspired interpretation of the Psalm. *Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.*

But the critics tell us that it is impossible that the writer of the Psalm could have understood things so far in the future. It is not a question what the writer understood. We are told by Peter that the prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and uttered things which they themselves did not understand, and that they

afterwards searched diligently "what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1 : 10, 11). What we have to do with, is what the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Psalm, understood by His own words. And of this we are definitely informed by the same Spirit through Paul, who says they refer to the ascent of Christ from hades to the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, and that the gifts which He from thence gave to man, were the ministry. Shall we believe the critics or the Holy Ghost?

The figure taken from the Psalm beautifully illustrates our Lord's manner of giving these gifts. The warrior first took the spoils from the enemy. In the Psalm it is: "He received gifts for men." This the apostle freely renders, "gave gifts unto men," showing the purpose for which they were taken. And as the conqueror liberates those who were held in bondage, He also "led captivity captive." He found men in bondage, prisoners of sin and Satan. These He first set free, and then gave them to the Church as His gifts.

Is there not another application of the figure of liberating captives? Until Christ died and rose again, the saints at death descended into sheol or hades, which is everywhere represented as "in the lower parts of the earth." Thither Christ went on the day of His crucifixion, and took with Him the penitent thief, to whom He said: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," which was that part of the place of the dead where the saints were waiting for the completion of the work of redemption. There was Lazarus "in Abraham's bosom," separated by the "great gulf" from the rich man, who was there in

torment. But when Christ emerged from hades He to
with Him the entire portion called paradise, and tra
ferred it to heaven, so that since Christ rose, paradise h
always been represented as in heaven. Thither Paul w
"caught up into paradise" (2 Cor. 12 : 4). Was not th
one of the results of Christ's descent "into the low
parts of the earth," and ascent "on high," leading "ca
tivity captive?"

We are taught here, also, that the ministry is
divin institution. It is not a scheme adopted by th
Church for the propagation of its work. All the orders
ministry, from apostles and prophets to evangelists, pas
tors and teachers, are gifts from the ascended Lord. Th
Church has no power or authority to make a minister, bu
is bound to receive those who are given by Christ. No
man has any right to take the office upon himself unless
he has a consciousness that he has been appointed to it,
and given as such to the Church. While it is true that
individual ministers are led of God to serve Him in parti-
cular local churches, yet of this the apostle does not here
speak. The Church in this Epistle is the whole body,
not the local organization, and the gifts are to the Church,
and belong to it as a whole. What a blessing to the
Church in all ages have these gifts been. Who can esti-
mate the value to it of such men as Paul, and Luther, and
Knox, and Wesley, and Whitfield, and Spurgeon, and
Moody, and a host of others, whose names shine forth as
stars all through the centuries of the Church's history?
What could the Church do without its God-given
ministry?

The various classes of the ministry are here named.
He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some

evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. The offices of apostle and prophet were temporary. They had a mission to perform in connection with the establishment of the Church. They were men who spoke by divine authority, as the immediate representatives of the risen Christ. It was required of an apostle that he should have seen the Lord after His resurrection. They received their instructions in the truth from Him in person, and were inspired by the Holy Spirit to give it forth with absolute correctness. When the whole body of Christian teaching was complete the office ceased, and the only authority for doctrine in the Church now is the written word of God—the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The apostles have no successors; there are none who have ever seen the risen Lord, and there are none who have any authority to give out any doctrine or teaching not found in the Scriptures. These are declared to be "given by inspiration of God, and are profitable . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, all those who come to us claiming to have further revelations are to be rejected as false prophets.

The evangelists are missionaries. They are the pioneers who preach the gospel where it has not been heard. We have been applying the term to preachers who labor among the Churches, in the work of harvesting the fruit of other's labors. These are properly pastors' assistants. The real evangelist is not primarily a harvester, but a sower of the seed. He goes into new fields, and gives the gospel to those who have never heard it. The word evangelist means, "a bearer of good tidings," and such he is. It is difficult to do this in so-called

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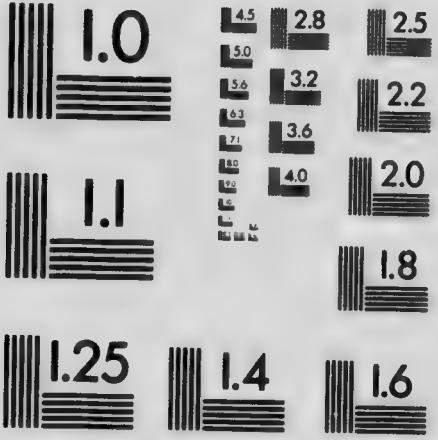

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Christian lands, where the tidings have already been given and are well known. The evangelist may remain long enough to reap some of the fruit of his own sowing, but his primary work is to give, for the first time, the gospel to the people.

The pastors and teachers are the same office. Their work is to have the care of the flock, harvesting the work of other's sowing, and teaching them in the things of God and the new life.

These several offices are named in their natural order. First come the apostles and prophets, giving to the Church the complete body of New Testament truth. Then follow the evangelists or missionaries, who carry the truth to the world, and make the glad tidings known to every creature. After these come the pastors and teachers to gather in and teach the saved in all the things of God, as contained in His Word. These ministries often overlap each other; thus, the apostles did also evangelistic work, especially as they visited new fields. And so the evangelists often do pastoral and teaching work. But no evangelist, or pastor, or teacher is ever permitted to obtrude himself into the place or work of apostle or prophet. They are not inspired, and are not sent to make known any new truths not found in the Word of God. The evangelist is to preach only the good tidings which are given by holy men, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Pastors and teachers are to receive all their truths from the Scriptures, which are their only authority for what they teach. Therefore, we reject all those who come with pretended revelation of things not found in the complete Word of God.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFTS (ver. 12).

What is the object in view in these gifts to the Church? This is definitely answered in the verse which follows: "*For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ.*" The saints, as we have seen, are all those who believe, and who constitute the entire Church. The ministry is the divine appointment for bringing these to maturity. They are to be gathered out from the world, and, as newborn babes, fed with the milk of the Word, and nurtured into mature life, being instructed in all that pertains to the spiritual life and walk.

But all this is with a view to a still further end. Many suppose that the ministry is given that the saints may be kept from backsliding and prepared for heaven. But here we are told that the perfecting of the saints is "unto the work of the ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ." The idea prevails that evangelists and pastors and teachers are employed by the Churches to do the work of the ministry in saving the lost and bringing them into the Church, and so building it up, while the members look on and approve their work if it suits them, and if not to criticise it. But here we learn that the ministry or service includes all the saints, and the Church is to be built up by the activity of all the members. It is utterly impossible for the pastor to do the personal work of finding out and bringing in the lost, and building up the Church. The work for which these officers are given is not this, but to prepare the members "for the work of the ministry," which ministry is "unto the building up of the body of Christ.

The Church is a great building in process of construction. It will not be complete till the last stone is laid, and the last piece is put in place. As each one is brought in he becomes a joint-worker with all the rest (for the stones are "living stones") in bringing in and putting in place the others; and the official ministry is given to train the saints, and perfect them for this service. The great Builder is, of course, the Holy Spirit, who "sets the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12:18). But He works through the ministry of all the saints, and not through the officers only. Such is the divine idea and purpose in the spiritual gifts. We see here the error of Rome, which claims that the Church consists of the priesthood and the hierarchy, and the laity are the servants. The truth, is the laity is Church to whom the ministry is given to serve it. Every Christian man and woman has a divinely given part in the work of the Church's up-building.

While upon the official ministry is laid the responsibility of shepherding and tending the flock, this does not take from any saint the right to watch over and instruct others in the Word. A Christian layman once asked his rector if he might read the Scriptures among his poor neighbors. He was told that he certainly might. But when he asked, if some cottager did not understand it, might he explain it to her? he received the emphatic answer, "No, certainly not, for that would be usurping the work of the priesthood." This shows how sadly the priesthood is by some confounded with official ministry. Let not the gifts from the ascended Lord be perverted from their divine purpose, which is for the development and instruction, and "perfecting of the saints unto the

work of the ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ."

3. THE MATURING OF THE CHRISTIAN (VS. 13-14).

The end and limit in view in these spiritual gifts is expressed in the next verses: "*Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the statue of the fullness of Christ.* Such is the standard of maturity toward which the united service is to work. As this is the pattern for the body as a whole, so it must be the pattern for each individual. The ideal is the fulness of perfect manhood, even that of Jesus Christ. Not till we all reach this will the work of the ministry be fulfilled.

In contrast with this he places the opposite condition, in which, alas, many Christians are found. *That we may be no longer infants.* Such is the word here used. The divine idea is not that the Church should be a nursery, with a ministry to feed children always with milk, and wheel them about in baby carriages. Yet there are many who never get beyond this stage of Christian life. They always need the care of more advanced Christians, or else they fall away, and instead of becoming matured for the work of the ministry, they continually occupy the time and energy of others to keep them alive. Of such the apostle speaks in Heb. 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." Alas, how much energy of working Christians is consumed over those

who themselves ought to be occupied in building up the body of Christ.

And what happens to these perpetual "infants"? *Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*" We are living in a time when the air is violently stirred by winds of doctrine, blowing hither and thither, and always away from the foundation truths. Each has some plausible or attractive feature with which it seeks to win followers. And who are they that are carried away by these? They are not the matured saints, but children, those who are unlearned in the Word of God, and with spiritual natures undeveloped, on whom it is easy for false teachers to practice their "sleights" and "cunning craftiness" with which they "lie in wait to deceive." We hear of young children on the street being enticed away by candy and toys used by kidnappers, who with these things succeed in carrying them away. So are many Christians easily abducted by Spiritualism, Christian Science, Dowieism, and Higher Criticism. Scholarship, however, profound, is no safeguard against apostacy, without spiritual enlightenment. Intellectual learning alone will never make mature or stable Christians.

But the Christian who has reached any degree of maturity is proof against these. You cannot lead away a full grown man with candy and toys. He spurns those who would insult his manhood with such things. So will the matured Christian treat religious deceivers. He is able to walk uprightly and straight forward against every cross wind of false teaching. The bane of the Church in these days of "seducing spirits and

doctrines of demons" is the spiritual infancy of those who ought to be teachers. Against all these the gifts of the ministry are provided for the training of spiritual children into fullgrown manhood "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

4. The Final Consummation (vs. 15-16.)

Passing from the thought of the matured manhood of the individual Christian, he comes to the final consummation of the purpose in the divine mind in giving to the Church the ministry. It is the perfect maturity of the one body. *But speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into Him which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together through that which every joint supplieth according to the working in the measure of every part, maketh the increase of the body, unto the building of itself up in love.* This is a somewhat complicated passage, which it is not easy in our space to unravel. But the main thought is not difficult to discern. Everywhere in this epistle the ultimate idea is the one body, of which Christ in heaven is the Head. This is Ephesians. And so, beyond the bringing of the individual Christian to perfection, is the gathering of the whole into an organism, whose life is sustained by the life of the Head. The ministry is not given for the building up of a local organization. Many suppose its chief work is to increase the membership of a local Church, even if it be done by taking from others. Nor is it for the propagation of a denomination. Neither the local Church nor the denomination is of any value, except as the means of the "increase of the body unto the building of itself up in love."

Such a thing as rivalry has no more place in the body of Christ than it has in your own body

The one essential thing in the Church is that each member shall be joined to Christ. They may have different views about many things, because none are perfect in knowledge. But there must be no difference as to their relation to the person of Christ. It is "into Him," and into nothing else that the Church is to be joined together. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the rock on which He builds His Church, against which the gates of hades shall not prevail. With this as the center and life, a multitude of differences may exist, while with one heart we worship together. But the moment we touch the person of Christ, or make our salvation, life, or hope rest on any other foundation, we have cut loose from all.

Thus the Church is a building in process of construction, and for this the ministry is given, and not until the final consummation is reached will the mission of evangelists, pastors, teachers and prepared saints be fulfilled.

Section III.

The New Life in Contrast with the Old.

Chap. 4:17—5:21

THE heavenly calling into which the saints have been introduced constitutes a new world which calls for a new system of ethics. This world's standard of morals will not do for the partaker of the heavenly calling. His new standing is to give character to his life, and determine his relation to all things about him. Therefore the apostle begins by saying: *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye walk not as Gentiles.* The "Gentiles" stand for the people of the world, in distinction from the people of God. That the contrast may stand out in clearness, he sets the walk of the two side by side.

1. THE WALK OF THE WORLD (vs. 18, 19).

We have here a picture of the fearful condition and character of the world. *In the vanity of their mind.* The reference is not to self-conceit, but to the emptiness, aimlessness, and lack of purpose which mark the life of the world. How true it is that the natural man lives without an object at all commensurate with his nature and destiny. To spend one's life in the pursuit of a few hundred millions, or a few years of pleasure, even if these were sure to be obtained, is to live for vanity. And yet the mass of mankind have no higher purpose than that.

Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God. This is the cause of their aimless lives. It is here implied that they were once enlightened, and were once in communion with the life of God. How could they be said to be darkened, unless they had once been "light"? And how could they be alienated unless they had once been in fellowship? And this is true. Not that the individual man begins his life in the light and fellowship of God and afterwards falls away. The apostle is speaking of the race as a whole. God created man upright and in perfect harmony with Himself. He was in full possession of the light of the knowledge of God, and of the purpose of his own being, and was in perfect fellowship with his Creator. But by disobedience he fell from all this, and ever since, the race has been going away from God, and becoming more deeply involved in darkness and alienation. He is himself a witness that he is not what he was made to be. Mankind is a wreck of what was once a magnificent structure, and like the old ruins of some ancient temple, he bears even in his fallen condition, some traces of his former glory. So the words "darkened" and "alienated" contain an allusion to the sad story of the fall. There is no evolution here.

And this alienation is "from the life of God." The race from the very first has retained the knowledge that there is a God. The universal recognition among all peoples of the earth, of a God who is ruler over all, is a relic of the time when man was in communion and full knowledge of Him. But as the life of God has gone from him, he is like a tree torn up by the roots, which retains its form, but has no life. Such is all heathen worship. Their religions are mere carricatures of the true. Their

gods are horrid monsters; their worship is a vain attempt to appease the anger of their gods; their forms are wholly without life, and often include the lowest sensuality; their hope is darkness without a glimmer of light. "When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom. 1 : 21). Thus have the nations become alienated from the life of God.

Nor is this alienation any less complete in civilized and so-called Christian lands. Here the mass of the world does not pretend to keep even the form of the original worship. In their ignorance and alienation from the life of God, they have thrown off all attempt to serve God, and have given themselves up to follow the inclination of their own darkened hearts. They are "without God, and without hope in the world."

Who being past feeling. Here is another mark of the world's condition. When one has thrown off his allegiance to God, he very soon reaches a point where he ceases to feel any sense of his sin, or care for his terrible and hopeless state. How true this is of the world to-day. It is a matter of the very least consequence to the mass of people, that they are in rebellion against God, and are trampling on His laws every day. Once the heart was tender, and there was concern about these things; but when a few years have passed, they have learned to sin and disregard God's commands and have no trouble about it. Nor does the certain doom that awaits the ungodly, any longer give them the uneasiness it once did. They have reached a point where they can live in sin, and under the cloud of impending judgment, sleep soundly at night.

They are equally past feeling in regard to the love of God in giving His Son to die for them. The awful scenes of the cross, as well as the more awful necessity which called for it, cease to move their hearts to the least feeling. What makes it so difficult in these days to win the unsaved to Christ, is not that the Gospel is not plain, or plainly preached; it is because there is no conviction of sin, no sense of need, and no response of the heart to the love of God as seen in redemption. The most awful warnings of God's Word, and the most tender pleadings of His loving heart fall without effect upon their ears. They are "*past feeling.*"

As a result of this condition, they *have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* Not that those living in these days of modern civilization and culture are absolutely unrestrained, or that they live as was customary among all classes in the Roman Empire in the days of Paul. There are restraining influences which prevent this. The conscience is not altogether dead in some; and the customs of society, and the influence of Christian sentiment serve to repress what is in the human heart, so that it is not fully developed. But these things exist in the nature of all. The sad picture of Rom. 3 : 10-18 is the divine exposure of the heart—not of some bad people, but of the whole race that is "alienated from the life of God." It is restrained, but is ever reaching out after these things, and yielding to them as far as expediency will permit. The daily papers show what is the trend of the human heart, and occasional outcroppings show what is beneath the covering of refined society. But however kept out of sight, it is true that the heart that is "alienated from the life of God," and

"past feeling" will be given up to the corrupt tendencies of what is within it, and will follow these with all the "greediness" which circumstances will permit.

2. THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN (VS. 20-24).

From this dark picture the apostle turns as if with great relief and satisfaction to another life on wholly different principles. *But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard Him and have been taught by Him the truth as it is in Jesus.* This last conditional clause hints at a state of things in the Churches of Asia very like what we see in our own time. There were some who had only adopted an external profession, who had never really "heard Him." It was only an intellectual assent to the Gospel, without coming under its transforming power. There may have been a degree of outward reform, while the great underlying principle had not been touched. Alas, how sadly true this is to-day.

But the Christianity of Paul is a more radical thing than that. The true Christian is one who has not only heard the Gospel and assented to it, but has "heard Him, and been taught by Him the truth as it is in Jesus." He has learned the truth of the heavenly calling, and on the power of the Spirit has laid hold upon it. To such the Christian walk will be a radically different thing from that of the world.

The character of that walk is set forth in the words which follow:—"*That ye put off concerning your former manner of life the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and that ye be renewed in the Spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.* It is

a matter of two men. It is not simply a reformation or improvement of the old man, but an entirely new man.

These two men are not simply the two natures existing in the believer, called the flesh and the spirit. There are but two men. The old man is the entire Adam race, which has already been described, and into which we are born at our natural birth. The new man is the same that we met in the second chapter of this Epistle, where the formation of the body of Christ is described as creating "in Himself of twain one new man." It is the body, of which so much has already been said, of which Christ is the Head, and all the saints are members.

To put off the old man and put on the new is to constantly reckon ourselves as no longer belonging to the old Adam race, but taking our stand as in Christ, and as members of His body, regulate our lives accordingly. To put on the new man is to live as a representative of the new race, controlled by its principles, and letting them work out in our lives, that we may be living witnesses to the truth of the one body before the world.

Every true Christian knows practically what this means. He knows what it is to be constantly called upon to deny the demands of the old man's nature, and to put him off. Nothing is more dangerous than to suppose this has been done once for all. But by a constant putting on of the new man; by reckoning one's self as one with Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit, he may live in continued victory over the old man. This is the principle which underlies the whole life and walk of the Christian in the world.

3. Some Details of the Walk (vs. 25-32).

Having given the principle or basis of the Christian life, the apostle comes to the practical application of it to particular things. It is here that the heavenly calling touches bottom, so to speak, in its contact with the every-day life. Let us keep in mind the essential difference between the morality of the Christian and that of the world. The latter teaches a moral life, and enjoins abstinence from falsehood, anger, theft and impurity, because these are condemned by the conscience, and lead to unhappy results; while the Christian principle is that these are to be avoided because they belong to the old man's nature, and have no place in the new, which he has put on. The world follows the path of virtue as a means to an end, and for the rewards to which it leads. The Christian follows the same path, as a result of what he is. There is an infinite difference between the two. The latter includes far more than the former, as it places one upon a higher plane, and sets up a far higher standard.

We come now to some of the details of Christian morality.

1. The new man will be truthful. *Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.* The word for "lying" here means more than simply saying that which is true. It covers all that is included in words or actions, or silence, or even in thought. Many think they are truthful when they can find a sense in which their words are true, though they are uttered with the intent to convey an untruth. Falsehood is not put away till it is put out of the heart.

The reason for this abstinence is: *ye are members one of another.* The members of the body must be in full con-

fidence, or else there is confusion and conflict. Since the Head is the source of life to the whole body, if one member deceives another, it is in direct opposition to the Head, and harmony is destroyed. The true Christian will abstain from all those forms of misrepresentation so common in business and social life, for the new man is first of all a man of truth.

2. The new man will not indulge in anger. *Be ye angry and sin not.* There are things in this ungodly world that ought to stir up the righteous indignation of all holy beings. There may be anger without sin. But if unholy wrath comes into the heart, it is not to be encouraged or retained. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* As the setting sun and the closing day is a type of the end of life, it should be a time for the final adjustment of all things. Never lie down to sleep, the type of death, with any feelings of heart that are displeasing to God. Go to sleep as you would wish to die, at peace with God and man. *Neither give place to the devil.* Why is this put in just here? If there is any condition of heart that is more favorable than any other for the devil to enter, it is that of unholy anger. To be in such a state is to make a place for him, and he will be quick to discern and occupy it. He who acts at all when in a passion, is sure to commit sin.

3. The new man will not steal. *Let him that stole steal no more.* The apostle is addressing those who were saved in the midst of their ungodly lives. He is not giving them conditions to be observed in order to salvation. But now that they are saved they must work out their salvation in their changed lives. They were liars and must become truthful; they were malicious and must become kind; they were thieves and must stop stealing.

The new principle of life attacks every habit of the old man. *But rather let him labor, working with his hands . . . that he may have to give to him that needeth.* He is entirely reversed in character and conduct. Whereas he took from his neighbor his goods, he now becomes a giver to the needy, of his own honestly earned things. In all these things which mark the new man, it will be noticed that the flow is outward toward others, whereas before, it had been inward toward self. The old man is selfish, the new man like his Head, is benevolent.

4. The new man will be pure in speech. *Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for building up.* There is no faculty of our nature that is capable of so much good or evil as that of speech. Of all the members of our bodies the tongue is the most mighty and most unruly, and therefore needs to be most under guard. The Apostle James makes it the key to the whole life. "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also" (Jas. 3 : 2). We control the whole body of the horse by a bit in his mouth, and we control the whole ship by a very small rudder. So the whole life is under control if the tongue is kept in subjection. Therefore the Christian is ever to have a guard over his tongue. If corrupting words come to mind and are upon the tongue, shut the mouth and let them not "escape the fence of the teeth." But he is not to be silent, but speak freely those things that will "build up" and "give grace to them that hear."

It is not meant that our conversation should be always solemn, serious and heavy. Often the most effective truths are conveyed in wit and playful words that provoke a smile. We are always to be genial, attractive and

affable. In a word, the Christian is to guard the purity, and cultivate the right use of that mighty agency for good or evil—the power of speech.

The reason given for this is that we *grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.* We are ever to remember that within us, as believers, dwells the personal Spirit of God, who is seeking to find expression through our words to influence others for good. When this is suppressed, or perverted through our careless use of the tongue, He is sorely grieved. Let our prayer therefore ever be: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips" (Ps. 141 : 3).

Thus the speech of the new man which we are to put on will be free from "bitterness," "wrath," "anger," "clamour," "railing," and "malice," and will be marked by kindness, tender-heartedness, and forgiveness, "even as God also in Christ forgave you."

4. Imitators of God (Chap. 5 : 1, 2).

No human being, however perfect, is to be the pattern for the Christian. Being united to the life of God, he is to accept nothing less than the divine standard of holy living. *Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children.* And how do children imitate their parents? Not altogether by copying what they see them do, but by following the characteristics which are inherited from them by birth. We have already seen that the new man was "created after God in righteousness and true holiness" (4 : 24). Any attempt to imitate God will be a complete failure without this. There must be a living force within prompting to those things. Therefore, to imitate God as dear

children, is to follow the divine impulses which were born in us when we became children of God, and we should give diligence to cultivate and develop these.

Then follows the chief divine characteristic which we are to take on. *Walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us.* The imitators of God will love as Christ loved -not in degree, for that is impossible, but in kind. The love of Christ, and His imitators, is ever giving itself for others. We cannot, like Him, give our bodies, an atoning sacrifice for others' sins, and there is no necessity, for He did this once for all, but we can offer our lives as an incense offering, which, like His, as "a sweet smelling savor," is ever pleasing to God.

5. Things to be Avoided, and Why (vs. 3-14).

In contrast with this, he points to the corruption which abounds in the world, and which the Christian is to avoid. *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not befitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

Many there are who would on no account indulge in the sinful and corrupt practices here referred to, but who seem to find a pleasure in talking and jesting about them. All witty sayings and jokes that have their point in impurity, are but slightly removed from the impure acts themselves; and to relish such conversation, and indulge in such jesting, is a sure mark of an impure mind. Such things are "not even to be named (or spoken of) among you," for this does not become saints.

It is a significant thing that covetousness, or the love of money is here put among these most impure things.

Many who would not even talk of the former impurities, can talk of little else than greed and money-making. Their lives are full of it, and they become idolatrous worshipers of the demon Mammon, whom Milton represents as:

> "The least erected spirit that fell
> From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of heaven's pavement-trodden gold,
> Than aught divine or holy.

Then follow same reasons why the new man should keep apart from all these.

1. Because these are the things which shut the ungodly out of the kingdom of Christ, and bring the wrath of God upon them. *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* Let no man tell you that sin is a small matter; that it is merely a trace of a lower form of existence, from which the race is being evolved into a perfect state; that God is good and kind and cannot punish sin in any of His creatures. "Vain words!" With such the devil secured the fall of the race in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die." And with the same he has ever since been hushing the voice of conscience, and denying the warning of God. "Let no man deceive you." These things which now fill the earth, will call forth the wrath of God in coming judgment. *Be not ye partakers with them.* To even talk and jest of these things is to dabble in, and touch the tongue to the poison of hell, and there is danger that the blood become infected.

2. Because you have yourselves been taken out of this pit of darkness, and brought into the light of God, to

be witnesses against them. *For ye were once darkness but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light.* The fact that we have yet remaining in us the nature of the old man, which is susceptible to temptation from such things, is reason why we should keep as far as possible from them. As "children of light," our walk should be wholly in the light, that we may at all times show forth the fruit of the light. *For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.*

3. Because the mission of the children of light is to reprove the works of darkness. To do this, there must be no fellowship with them. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* The word "reprove" here means to convince,—to make their evil nature to be seen. Hence the use of the figure of light. Christians are not sent to denounce men for their wickedness. The law did that. They are first themselves enlightened and then sent into the world to show by the spirit of their lives a contrast to the darkness that abounds. They are not simply to abstain from the evils in the world, but are to shine upon them. This, more than anything else will convince the world of its wicked ways. There is nothing that so rebukes the impure, as the simple presence of a holy man or woman. The mouths of the profane and vulgar are shut, and like bats at the rising of the sun, they hide away from the light. If you denounce them, they gather their forces to resist; but none can complain of, or gainsay the silent power of holiness and purity. Hence, *all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* Therefore the Christian is to *arise from among the dead*, and come out from those who sleep

in the darkness of spiritual death, that he may receive the light, with which to convince the world of sin.

6. Watchfulness and Praise (vs. 15-21).

We are next reminded that the Christian's walk is not to be a careless indifferent pleasure trip. *See that ye walk circumspectly*, or as in the R.V. "Look therefore carefully how ye walk." In the world of evils, it is necessary to be wide awake and observe carefully every step we take. The word "circumspectly" means looking around, using the eyes as well as the feet. A cat was walking upon a wall that was covered with broken pieces of glass. How carefully she put down her foot, watching a place for every step. That was walking "circumspectly." We shall need to give much attention to the conditions in which we live, that we may walk "not as fools but as wise."

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. This is better rendered, "Buying up the opportunity."—The watchful Christian is to seek for opportunities to let his light shine, and seize upon them even at the price of personal self-denial. This is made all the more urgent when we reflect upon the times in which we live. "The days are evil." The world is so full of godlessness and iniquity, and there is so little care for spiritual things that it requires much wisdom and self sacrifice to secure the opportunity to execute our mission. For heavenly beings to walk through the darkness of these evil days, and keep their light shining, is no easy task.

It seems at first a little strange that at this point he should introduce a warning against drunkeness. *Be not*

drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit. The connection here is significant. As wine intoxicates the flesh, and intensifies all the evil passions of the carnal nature, producing riot and darkness, so the Spirit intensifies all the faculties of the new born being and brings them into action and increases the light. If you would bring into action all the evil that is in fallen man, given him wine. If you would bring into living activity all the powers of the spiritual nature and cause their fruit to abound, let him be filled with the Spirit. The reference to drunkeness here, is by way of illustration. We miss entirely the force of the passage when we use it simply as a lesson on temperance.

The filling of the Spirit is needful for every part of the life of the Christian in the world. Its result is seen in the verse which follows: *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hyms and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.* As wine fills the the carnal heart with sensual pleasure, causing a desire to sing, so the Spirit inspires joy which expresses itself in the songs of the heavenly life. In such songs, the fellowship of Christians is expressed, as they speak together the blessed truths which make them one, and express their common love and praise to God "from whom all blessings flow." Thus the Spirit filled ones "make melody in their hearts to the Lord." Whatever may be the quality of the music to the artistic ear of the natural man, the only melody that reaches God at all, is the melody of the heart. All else is lost; but God is listening for the music that is in the heart of the redeemed sinner, kindled and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

And so the new life in its practical manifestation on earth culminates in spiritual song and *giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Section IV.

The Christian in the Home.

Chap 5:22—6:9.

THE home is the heart and center of all human relationships. It is here that the first seeds are planted and developed, the fruit of which will spread and effect for good or ill, society, the state and the Church. If right principles control all the members of the family in their relation to each other, we may be assured that they will be effective for good in every sphere in life. Therefore the family is the first divine institution. It is above and before the state or the Church.

The home is the one place above all others for the manifestation of the graces which characterize the true Christian life, and there is no place where it is so liable to fail, or where its failures will be so manifest. The measure of spiritual attainment and power will be more fully discerned there than anywhere else. This is why it is often harder for one to speak personally to the members of his own household about spiritual things, than to others. They know him better, and he is conscious that they see his failures more clearly than those who only see him in public. Hence many active workers in the Church and in the world, are silent at home. Happy indeed is that Christian in whom the members of his own family see no failures. Hence the importance of this section of the

epistle, in which we have the divine teaching on the manifestation of the new life in the home.

We find this subject treated under three heads : first, the husband and wife ; second, parents and children ; third, master and servants. The words immediately preceding are :—"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord." This is the key to all that follows. Taking up this principle, he proceeds to apply it to each of the three relationships which make up the home. And here, as everywhere, the principle of law is excluded. He lays down no laws for the government of the household, but taking the nature of the Christian's calling as the basis, he shows how its spirit applied will express itself in all these particulars.

1. Husband and Wife (vs. 22-23).

Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church. Although this is the practical part of the epistle, and concerns the walk of the believer, yet we find doctrine here also. The great central theme of the epistle comes to the front here. The relation of the Church to Christ as His body, is the model for the Christian wife in her relation to her husband. The marriage relation is the divinely appointed type of the heavenly Bridegroom and His bride the Church. It was to set this forth in a figure, as well as to be a blessing to the race, that marriage was instituted. The perfection of the relation of husband and wife is, therefore, to maintain and exemplify the principles and the spirit of Christ in His relation to the Church, and of the Church in her relation to Christ. If both parties seek diligently to do this,

it will settle every difficulty which can possibly arise between them. It should be remembered in all this, that the apostle is dealing only with Christians. He has no word for the regulation of unchristian households. He has but one key to the solution of all questions. Let the nature and principles of your heavenly calling control all things in your earthly life.

Now, as to the submission of the wife to her husband, it is evident that it has nothing of the nature of law. There has been much said about the duty of the wife to obey her husband, and many suppose that Paul teaches this most emphatically. It has therefore been incorporated into some widely used marriage ceremonies, in which the bride is pledged to obey. But nowhere does the New Testament teach that the wife is to obey her husband. That would be to put her under law and destroy the type. The submission here enjoined is explained in the words which follow. *Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything, and He is the Savior of the body.*

How then is the Church subject to Christ? Understand this, and you have the perfect model of the relation of the wife to her husband. The Church is not under law to be commanded, but is to take the place of simple confiding and delightful trust. So the true wife delights to put herself in loving subjection to her husband, in whose love she rests, co-operating with him in all things according to his will. There is no thought of command or obedience. Christ is "the Savior of the body." The Church is the body, and in order that He may save and protect it, He requires that it shall maintain the attitude of submission and trust. The term "obey" is not used

here ; it is carefully reserved to be applied to children and servants, when he comes to speak of them.

The submission here required does not imply inferiority. Indeed, it can only exist between equals. The Church is made one with Christ, that as His body it may submit to the will of the Head. The wife is one with her husband, so that in submitting to him she is not submitting to another outside of herself. In the body all the members are equal, and there is but one will. In true marriage the Christian wife feels no bondage, but only joyful trust. The words "command" and "obey" find no place in Paul's teaching concerning this relationship.

Turning next to the husband, he says : "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.* He does not tell the wife to love her husband, but to submit herself to him. So the Church is not told to love Christ, but she is to believe the love that Christ has to her (1 John 4 : 16). It was He who first loved us and gave Himself for us. We did not choose Him, but He choose us, and we have only to accept His love and submit to His choice, and let this beget in us love to Him. Thus it is in true marriage. The wife is first loved and chosen, and thus her love is won. She submits to love, therefore it is the husband who is told to love his wife, after the pattern of Christ, of whom he stands as a type. And as Christ, because of His love for the Church, sacrificed Himself for it, so is the husband to sacrifice himself for his wife ; practicing self-denial for her comfort and welfare. In a sense he is to be her savior. As she has committed herself to him, he is to give himself for her interests and happiness, which are bound up with his own.

The mind of the apostle, which is here the mind of the Holy Spirit, is so filled with the great theme of the epistle —the oneness of Christ and the Church—that when he refers to the divine Lover as sacrificing Himself for His bride, he seems constrained to enlarge upon it. So, turning for the moment from the case of the husband, he speaks of the purpose of Christ in giving Himself for the Church. "*That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.* Here are three things which Christ does for the Church, represented by the three words: sanctify, cleanse, and present.

The Church was sanctified by the work of Christ on the cross, when He gave Himself for it. He says in His prayer, in John seventeenth chapter: "I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified." By virtue of His union with the Church as one body, when He offered Himself as a sacrifice for their sins, and rose again for their justification, they partook of His righteousness, and He was made unto them sanctification, "for both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one" (Heb. 2:11). Therefore we have the blessed assurance that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Having sanctified the Church by giving Himself for it, and thus securing for it a standing before God as "complete in Him," he next proceeds to cleanse it. This He does by the washing of water by the Word." There is no reference here to baptism, as some have labored to show. It is definitely stated that the cleansing here

is by the application of the Word. It is by virtue of the sanctification which we have in Christ, that we are "accepted in the beloved." There is also a sanctification of our lives and walk, which is accomplished by the daily application of the Word of God. "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth" (John 17 : 17). Being sanctified in Christ as to our standing, we are cleansed in our persons and lives by the application of the Word of God to all our acts and words and thoughts. Thus the heavenly Bridegroom is now making pure His bride. We ought to come often and gladly to the water for our bath, and never avoid it, for fear some cherished spot will be washed away. Let us ever remember for whom we are being prepared.

Next comes the presentation. When His work of of sanctifying and cleansing shall be complete, He will take to Himself His pure bride, the "glorious Church—holy and without blemish." We have here the three appearings of Heb. 9 : 26, 24, 28. "He hath once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; this is for our sanctification. "He now appears in the presence of God for us"; this is for our cleansing. "He shall appear the second time apart from sin, unto salvation"; this will be the presentation. We have the blessed assurance that, however imperfect we are as yet, He will surely bring His work to perfection. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," (Phil. 1 : 6).

It is out of this truth that the apostle gathers his teaching concerning the marriage relation. And so, returning again to his theme, he says : "*Even so ought men*

to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church." This is the model for the marriage relation. The two lives are blended into one. The wife receives her standing, position, title and name from her husband, to whom she joyfully submits herself in confiding trust, uniting her will with his. The husband receives her as a part of himself, and loves, protects and honors her as his own body.

He next refers to the establishment of the marriage relation in Eden, and gives the spiritual meaning of the words of God in connection with it, as recorded in Gen. 2:24: "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.* This was a part of the marriage ceremony of the first pair, and was intended to apply to every case that should follow. But Paul, by the Spirit's inspiration, sees a deeper truth in these words, and adds: "*This is a great mystery.*" There is no great mystery in a man's going out from his father's family to establish a family of his own. The mystery consists in the deeper hidden meaning that is in the words. We have seen before that the word "mystery" means a truth that is only known by divine revelation. Such is the mystery of the Church, as explained in the third chapter. The great mystery referred to here is explained when he adds: "*But I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*" That is, in those words concerning the union of the first pair in Eden, and which are repeated in nearly every Christian marriage ceremony today, there lies concealed the great truth of the one only original marriage, of which all others are a typ

—the union of Christ and the Church as one body. As Christ left His Father and joined Himself to His bride, and they became one body, so shall the man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.

From all this it will be seen how important and sacred and holy is the marriage relation. And since all these injunctions grow out of the nature of the heavenly calling, it is evident that they can only be applied when both parties are Christians, and partakers of that calling. We see therefore the reason why no Christian man or woman should marry except "in the Lord." Marriage among unbelievers can only be at best a human agreement for worldly and fleshly purposes. The great principles which underlie and pervade all true marriage can only have place when both are Christians. If a Christian marries an unbeliever, the union must of necessity be on the ground of the flesh, for the unbeliever has no spiritual life. But the believer is called to a life and walk only in the spirit, (Gal. 5 : 25).

2. Parents and Children (Chap. 6 : 1-4).

The next relationship in the home is that of parents and children. As this letter was to be read in the churches of Asia, it is supposed that children would be present to hear it, and so the apostle addresses a message directly to them. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* Here the word "obey" is introduced. It is applied to those under command—to children and servants, not to the wife. The word here used for children is not the one which means fullgrown sons, but refers to young boys and girls. We can see a change in his tone,

as he comes down to their capacity, and speaks of things which are within the understanding of little children.

It is also "in the Lord." It is supposed that they too are believers, though very young. They are addressed as Christian children. This is not the place to discuss at length the question how young a child may be a Christian, but it is certain that it may be at a much earlier age than is generally supposed. The conditions of salvation are so simple that a child can apprehend them almost as soon as he can apprehend anything. It is the duty of Christian parents to teach their children about Jesus and His love as soon as they are old enough to know and love their mothers. The child in a Christian home should, if possible, never be left to know a time when he did not believe and trust Jesus Christ. It is far easier to bring the little child to faith in Christ, than older ones, and they make the strongest and best Christians in after life. The apostle has in mind the normal Christian family, and in such, very young children are addressed as "in the Lord."

The first lesson for a Christian child to learn is obedience to parents. The first lesson for anyone to learn is submission. All Christian life, whether it be in the child or the adult, begins there. To the child, before he is old enough to know and submit to God, the parent stands in the place of God. The father and mother are practically God to him; they are his supreme authority. The sooner the child learns to subject his will to another, the better it is for all the life that is to follow. It is the turning point in every life. Some never learn it, and they are lost. Some learn it in mature life and it becomes a very difficult matter. The sooner after birth the surrender comes, the easier it is. If it comes while the child is in arms, it is

well. Whenever for the first time the will of the child comes into direct conflict with the will of the parent, then the crisis is on. One or the other will give way. If the parent yields, the child is confirmed in his rebellion, and it will be harder ever after to conquer that will. But if the child is induced to submit entirely, and accept the parent's authority as supreme, the first great lesson of life is learned. The way is prepared for submission to the authority of the state, and of God. Therefore obedience to parents is the first lesson for children, and so important and inclusive is it, that to it is attached the promise, and it is called the "chief commandment." And on the other hand, disobedience to parents is among the awful sins which shall mark the "perilous times" which shall come "in the last days," which by this sign seem to be even now upon us, (2 Tim. 3 : 2).

Since the parent occupies so important a place as the representative of God to the child, he should give the greatest diligence to fulfill the office faithfully. Little do parents realize how much depends on the short period during which they have the child under their absolute authority, preparatory to his being turned over to the authority and fatherhood of God. It is one of the saddest marks of the present time, that this period is not only wasted, but is used to strengthen the self-will and rebellion of the child, and teach him to disregard all rule and all authority. No wonder that it is hard to bring the adult to submit to God, and obey His will, after such a childhood as many of them have passed.

Therefore the instruction to parents follows:—*And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chasteniug and admonition of the Lord.* Use the

fatherly office, after the manner of God's dealing with His children. Be a true representative of God to them, that from you they may first learn what God is. Be not a tyrant; harsh, unreasonable, and vindictive, who only provokes to wrath; but like God, be tender, loving, and kind. Ever seek to promote their spiritual welfare. Do not drive them by force, but win them by love to the way of peace and holiness. Whether using "chastening" for their correction, or "admonition" for their instruction, let it always be that "of the Lord,"—that is, such as the Lord uses with His children. Parents, and especially young parents, will do well to study prayerfully this important passage. The same admonition will apply to teachers, in so far as they have the care of young children.

3. Masters and Servants (vs. 5-9).

The next relationship in the household is that of masters and servants, and so we have instruction concerning them. The first word is to the servants. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.* The word "servant" here means a bond slave. In the time of Paul, slavery was at the very foundation of the Greek and Roman social structure. The slave was only an "animated tool," and had no human rights. He was used only for the convenience or pleasure of his owner; his life had no sacredness, he could be killed on the slightest provocation, with no investigation.

We might expect the apostle to denounce the whole institution of slavery as a glaring sin, and demand its total abolition, especially in the Christian household. But

it is not the method of the Gospel to attack human institutions, but to teach principles which will correct the evils and overthrow whatever is in itself sinful. Let the principles which the apostle here gives to both servants and masters be observed, and slavery will die of itself. Read Paul's letter to Philemon regarding his Christian slave Onesimus. If the injunctions there given were observed, there would be left very little of the evils of slavery in that home. To the Corinthians, Paul wrote: "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bond slave, care not for it, but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bond slave, is the Lord's freeman; likewise he that was called being free, is Christ's bond-slave," (1 Cor. 7 : 20-22).

So here, his instruction to the Christian bond slave is to perform the duties of his position as a Christian; recognize his relationship to his master and be faithful to his calling, till the Lord shall set him free. This will apply also to the employe in every capacity in our time. Let him be faithful to his employer; *not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto man.* Let him regard every duty in connection with his calling, as a part of his service to Christ. How much better and happier would servants and employes be, if they realized that they were doing service first unto Christ, and not to man. And for such faithfulness there is a reward. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* Thus may both the servant or employe and the master or employer, please

and serve God and receive his reward, without a change of relationship.

His next word is to masters, whom he also addresses as Christians. *And ye masters do the same thing to them, and forbear threatening; knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with Him.* If it is the duty of Christian servants to be faithful to their employers, it is no less the duty of Christian employers to be faithful to their servants. They are to "do the same thing;" that is, be controlled by the same principle, and possessed of the same spirit. They must never forget that both master and servant are alike servants of the same Master, and whatever may be the difference in rank here, or in human society, the wealthy master who lives in ease and luxury, and the lowest servant that serves him, rank precisely the same in heaven, where there is no respect of persons. They are before God simply fellow-servants. Philemon the wealthy master is told to receive back his runaway slave, whom Paul returns to him as a convert to Christ, "as a brother beloved" (Philem. 16).

If the spirit here set forth for both servants and masters were observed, how long would slavery exist? This is the way the Gospel deals with evil. It is crowded out by forcing in the Christian spirit. This is the only solution, aside from the personal coming and reign of Christ, of the problems that now threaten the foundation of the social structure. Let Christian principles come in and possess both capital and labor, and all difficulties would vanish. But so long as selfishness and pride of rank rule the hearts of men, there will be oppression on one hand, and rebellion on the other, and the conflict can only end in the overthrow of the social order.

It is evident that the ideal home as set forth in this section, can only exist among Christians; and such only has the apostle in mind in this epistle. He has no instruction to give for the regulation of the homes of the unbelieving world. They will have to overcome their difficulties as best they can, on the ground of the flesh and the world. But the principles which are here set forth, are the natural outworking of the heavenly calling in the home-life of the saints. Husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants, all are partakers of the divine calling, and are living in heavenly places in Christ. This is assumed throughout, and is the basis of all that is here written. Hence it is that these things come so late in the epistle. They could not come earlier.

Section V.

Warfare in Heavenly Places.

Chap. 6 : 10-24.

THE apostle is about to bring his letter to a close. He has covered the whole field of the believers' heavenly position in Christ, and their consequent walk on the earth. He has taken them into the deep and wonderful secrets of divine grace, in which they were chosen, and called, and sealed, and united to Christ as one body ; he has pointed out to them some of the natural results of such a calling, as shown in lives of purity, truth and love, in their relation to the world, the Church and the home. He reserved to this closing section a subject of the most intense interest and importance, as it bears upon all that has gone before. He would have them ever remember that the heavenly life is to be spent for a time in the very midst of the enemy's country, and that every inch of the ground will have to be defended against the assaults of organized bands of mighty foes, who will use every possible means to overthrow and rob them of all. That the saints may be forewarned and instructed for this conflict, he adds this closing section, beginning with the injunction : *Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

1. THE ENEMY AND THEIR METHODS, (VS. 10-12).

Paul saw very distinctly what a life of separation to God, such as he had been speaking of, would mean. And that they might be able to understand the nature of the foes they would have to contend with, and their methods of warfare, he proceeds to describe them. *For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood.* We think sometimes that it is hard to maintain a Christian life against the influence of ungodly people with whom we are associated, especially when they attack our position and denounce the things we believe, and deny our Bible. These things are indeed great annoyances, but they are only human—they are flesh and blood. If we are well-grounded in the faith, these ought not for a moment to move, or even very greatly disturb us. Human opinions after all are weak, and can have little effect to shake the faith of one who knows what he believes and why he believes it. If we have ordinary independence and power of self-assertion, we can with comparative ease defend our position against mere human arguments, or human ridicule. Politicians are not overthrown by the arguments or assaults of their opponents, but when attacked, meet it with their own arguments. So a Christian who knows the ground of his faith, need not be in much fear of "flesh and blood"—the opposition of mere human beings like himself.

Nor need we have much fear from temptations which men place before us, by which they seek to draw us away from a right course. We ought to have personal independence and will enough to resist those who are no greater than we. If we are really committed to the cause we have espoused, all the power of flesh and blood ought

not to be able to move us from the Rock on which we have, for good and sufficient reasons, built our faith and hope.

But alas, we have mightier foes than these, and the apostle marches them out for our inspection. Not flesh and blood, *but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* Such is the revised version and the only correct reading of this passage. This is a most fearful presentation of the combined forces which assail our position, and with whom we have to contend. No mention is made of any human or visible power. Such are too insignificant to be classed with these. Our real enemies are invisible, but none the less personal and mighty. We shall do well to consider them and their methods.

At the head of this organized force stands Satan, the arch adversary. The personality of the devil is as clearly and positively assumed throughout the New Testament, as is that of God, or any other character which appears therein. It is Satan's plan to make use of "wiles" (deceitful schemes) to carry on his warfare. Chief among these is the propagation of the widely extended modern notion that the devil is nothing more than the principle of evil. And so successfully has he circulated this idea, that the belief in a personal devil is now looked upon by those who deny the divine authority of the Scriptures, and by some who profess to accept them, as an obsolete superstition. But throughout the Bible, and especially in the teaching of Jesus, and His apostles, the devil is no figure of speech. He is everywhere recognized as a living, acting, and mighty person. He is called in the New

Testament by no less than twenty-four names, every one of which implies a distinct personality. More than once is he called by our Lord, "the prince of this world." Paul call him "the God of this world," and also in this epistle "the prince of the powers of the air," (2 : 2).

Under the leadership of this mighty prince, are "the principalities, the powers, the world rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." These are the myriads of fallen angels and demons who infest the air of this world, and have much to do with its affairs. In this material age it is customary to ignore these mighty agencies, or deny their existence altogether. But the Scriptures plainly teach that there exists all about us in the sphere of the unseen world, a host of beings as real and personal as the men and women with whom we associate. Among these are the "principalities and powers," the same as among the angels of God. It is probable that these titles belonged to them in heaven before their fall, and when they were cast out with Satan their prince and leader, they retained their ranks and are still referred to by these titles.

With these are associated a lower class of wicked spirits called in the Scriptures "demons," wrongly translated "devils" in the old version. These are especially active in the affairs of men. They seek incarnation in the bodies of men and women, and often take possession of their persons and faculties, and speak with their voices, and in other ways communicate through them with human beings. Jesus recognized them, and addressed them directly, and commanded them to come out of those whom they possessed. He also gave His disciples authority to do the same. The manifestations of demon-

ism are hardly less to-day than in the time of Christ. They are behind very much of the lawlessness and crime and disease and insanity and false teaching which fill the earth. They are the working power of all the genuine phenomena of Spiritualism by which they are deceiving and leading to ruin increasing millions in these last days.

These wicked spirits are here called "the world rulers of this darkness." We met them in the second chapter of this epistle, as "the powers of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The world is in its time of darkness now, and this darkness is under the dominion of Satan its prince, who carries on his operations through the agency of these "world-rulers."

But these invisible foes are not confined to the outer visible world. They have access, and for some reason are permitted to exercise their baleful influence even in "the heavenly places." They wage their warfare against the children of God in the very sphere of their heavenly calling, where they are ra[illegible]nd seated with Christ, and where are "all spiritua[illegible]sings in Him," (Chap. 1 : 3).

Such are the adversaries with whom we have to contend. They are the mighty forces which Satan has at his command, and with which he carries on a thoroughly organized system of warfare, according to a settled plan. These every Christian must meet and overcome, or be overcome by them.

Let us now turn our attention to their method of warfare. We often think of Satan as bringing physical evil and disasters upon us, causing trouble, pain, and suffering ; or as bringing us into great temptation to sin ; or as instigating the commission of crime. He is often pictured

to us as some hideous monster with horns and hoofs and spear, and with a countenance expressive of the greatest depravity, malice, and wickedness, and as associated with deeds of horrible foulness and shame, and in open and avowed warfare against all good and virtue and happiness.

No doubt Satan himself is the author of all such representations. They are among his "wiles" and "devices" to divert attention from the real devil to an imaginary one, that he may the better carry on his schemes in another, and his real character. The real devil is the very opposite of this. He "fashions himself into an angel of light," and his servants also "fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness," (2 Cor. 11:14-15). It is often exceedingly difficult to distinguish them from those they seek to personate. Their place of warfare is not in the haunts of vice, but in the heavenly places. Their purpose is not primarily to bring men into sin and crime and suffering here. They have a far deeper purpose than that. They know that the link which connects the Christian with Christ and all good here and hereafter is his faith, and therefore they make their chief assault upon this. They strike at the vitals, and leave the results to follow. They seek to blind man's eyes as to the truths of God, and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They labor by every means to substitute something else for the work of Christ as the foundation of our faith. Or if we will not accept "another gospel," they seek to put into our minds and hearts doubts as to the truth of the doctrines of grace, and of the Bible as the Word of God. Entering the sphere of the heavenly places, they attack the most vital truths that give us peace and rest. Every Christian knows what a struggle he has at times to maintain a sense of the reality of spiritual

things, especially those great and glorious truths which form the body of this epistle. This is because Satan and his host of accomplices have access to the mind and heart, and are continually putting thoughts and feelings there, which, if allowed to remain, pervert both faith and reason. Oh, the wiles and snares of the devil! And this, too, in the very sanctuary of heavenly places in Christ. It is a warfare of faith and not of works, for Satan knows that if our faith is destroyed, our works will fall as a building whose foundation is removed.

Our adversary is too wise to appear as an open teacher and advocate of sin and irreligion. As an angel of light he advocates very much truth. He will foster everything that makes for morality and religion. He will magnify everything that will serve to quiet the conscience of the people, and make them satisfied with their religious observances, so long as they serve to keep their minds off from the real vital and saving truth—the death of Christ for their sins, and His life in heaven for their righteousness. He will advocate ritualism, morality, and even the ten commandments, knowing that these are only the "ministration of death," for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." He will warn the people against the horrid devil that he has had set up as a caricature of himself, to frighten the people into his real deadly snares.

How ready many people are to follow anything that has some good in it. If a system appears which teaches morality, kindness, good will, and physical health and purity, and is opposed to sin and unrighteousness, they are captured at once. They say: "It must be of God, for God is good, and all good is of God," not knowing

that much good is of the devil, and used as a bait to get people into hi. snares, and to keep them from the greatest and only eternal good ; and that for this very purpose, he "fashions himself into an angel of light."

Such is the character of the enemy, and some of his wiles. So mighty is he, that we should have no power at all against him, but for the protection and help of our God. It was because our Lord knew all this, that He prayed for us that we might be kept "from the evil one" (John 17:15), and taught us to pray, "deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13). And for our protection against such mighty foes, He has provided for us the only adequate armor, which we shall now examine.

2. The Whole Armor of God, (vs. 13-17).

Just in proportion as we appreciate the mighty power of the adversary, and the inevitable warfare that is upon us, shall we with interest study our defense. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.* We are living in an evil day. Men talk eloquently, and with enthusiasm of the advance of science and the arts of civilization which are making the twentieth century so marvelous in its achievements, but viewed from our position in the heavenly places, it is seen to be a time of midnight darkness, through which the "children of light" have to make their way, surrounded by the "spiritual hosts of wickedness," intensely determined on their overthrow. Therefore their only safety is to be covered with the panoply of God.

To illustrate the believer's equipment for the great conflict, the apostle sets before us the Roman soldier pre-

pared for battle. Every piece of his armor has its counterpart in the provision which God has made for our defense. Let us notice the different parts of this armor.

1. *Having your loins girt about with truth.* The military belt was fastened about the waist to hold the garments together, and brace up the body for action. It stands for firmness, conviction, and resolute decision. This is of the first importance in the Christian warfare. And what is it that gives us this? Nothing gives such confidence and assurance as familiarity with the great truths which God has revealed in His Word, and which are the Christian's reasons for being what he is. He who is unfamiliar with these, is like a soldier without his girdle; he is weak before the enemy. Therefore the Christian warrior must be first of all a diligent student of the truth.

2. *Having on the breastplate of righteousness.* The enemy will be sure to strike at the weakest place, especially if this is the vital spot. Now there is no place where we are so weak, as in the matter of righteousness, and there is nothing so vital as this. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5 : 20). Absolute righteousness is required, and we have none. Satan sees this, and aims his arrows at it. He accuses the believer of sin. He points out to him his utter unfitness in life and character for fellowship with God and the holy ones. And how many, knowing that the accusation is true, have been overcome.

For protection against this, we have provided "the righteousness of God, which is by faith," and which is "upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3 : 22). This, like

the soldier's breastplate, covers this weakest and most vital part. If the enemy hurls our sin upon us, we reply, "Yes, it is true, but it is God that justifieth — I am made the righteousness of God in Him." The blow falls upon our breastplate, and we are unmoved.

3. *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* The shoes of the soldiers were his preparation for the march. They were so made as to protect the feet and lower limbs, that he might move with ease and safety over all kinds of ground. Idleness is a weakness in the soldier. He is safest when moving. This is true of the Christian. Though he is to "stand in the evil day," he is not to be still. He is to be ever going. As a preparation for this, he is put in charge of the "good tidings of peace," to carry to the world. It is not the experience of peace which constitutes this part of the armor, but the gospel of peace — the preparation for its proclamation. It is that which makes the evangelist and the missionary. To hold our ground is not enough. We are strongest against the enemy when nerved up for the attack, or aggressive achievement. We are best fortified in faith and truth when we are spreading it. Therefore we are to strengthen ourselves against the enemy, by being heralds of the gospel of peace.

4. *Above all, taking the shield of faith.* The word used here for "shield" is not the one which means the small round shield, but the large one, which covers almost the entire person. It is thus "above (or better, 'over') all," as it covers and fortifies and protects all the rest. It was carried on the left arm, and could be turned in the direction from which the darts of the enemy came. This is faith, "the conviction of things not seen." If we only

half believe the truths we profess, and only half trust in the assurance of the God of truth, we are weak against the assaults of the enemy, and are easily induced to give way. But if those unseen things which we have believed and trusted the great truths of our redemption and coming glory are real to us, if our faith makes them living facts, how strong we feel. The fiery darts will be hurled at us from every side, but if we turn toward them our shield, the certain conviction of the reality of the invisible things, the enemy's darts fall upon it, and are "quenched." Satan has no dart that can pierce through faith. It is only when for a moment faith is removed, that his arrows touch us. Therefore the shield of faith is to be "taken up." By our own voluntary act, we are to take it, and oppose it to the enemy's attacks.

5. *And take the helmet of salvation.* It is worthy of note that the word "take" here, is not the same word as that used in the preceding verse. The word there means to actively sieze and use. Thus we are to "take up" the shield. But here the word means to receive, accept, or welcome as a gift. Let us see how it applies to the helmet.

The head of the soldier would appear above the shield, and would be still exposed, and would therefore need its own protection. So it often happens that one whose faith accepts the reality of unseen things, and knows that they are true to the saved children of God, is nevertheless disturbed by doubts as to whether he is one of the saved. He asks: "Have I believed? have I saving faith?" Thus the head, a vital part, is exposed above the shield. What shall such do? Cover the head by accepting or welcoming the free gift of salvation. Let him appropriate

the offer. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Thus accepting the helmet of salvation, his whole person is covered with the armor which God provides.

6. And take *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* The left hand holds the shield, and the right hand first receives the helmet, and places it on the head, and then that hand is free to take the sword. This is the weapon for aggressive warfare. It is the last piece of the armor to be taken. All the others must be in place before he can use the sword. Especially must the right hand be free. The helmet and the sword cannot both at once be in the hand. Let the helmet first be firmly placed on the head. What does this teach us? The question of salvation must be settled and out of hand before the Christian is ready to use the Word of God as an aggressive weapon. So long as the question of his own salvation occupies his thought and energy, he is not free to do aggressive work. But having the shield of faith on his left arm, and the helmet of assured salvation on his head, then he is free to use the sword of the Spirit.

But by the use of the sword is not meant preaching the gospel. The Christian warfare has to do solely with our conflict with the enemies of our souls, and it is waged wholly in the heavenly places. The Word of God is our means of opposing the "hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." There is nothing that so cuts and defeats the adversary of souls, as a text from the Word of God. It is to him the end of all controversy. Unlike the higher critics, he never for a moment contests its inspiration or divine authority. With this weapon Jesus withstood him in the wilderness. He had only to say, "It is written,"

and His enemy fled from the field. So he will whenever the Christian puts against his evil suggestions the Word of God upon the subject in question. This completes the defensive armor of God.

3. Prayer a Means of Aggressive Warfare (vs. 18-20).

Being thus equipped with the whole armor, he comes now to that which constitutes the real fighting. *With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance.* No part of the Christian life can be sustained without prayer. It is connected with the exercise of every faculty of the new-born nature. Prayer is called "the Christian's vital breath." As we must breath with the exercise of each function of our bodies, so in everything that relates to the spiritual life, prayer is a necessity. Especially is this true in our warfare with Satan. Every battle is fought in prayer. It is "with all prayer," that is, using every kind of approach to God, as the need requires. It is to be "at all seasons," or at every step, and in every crisis. With "supplica " — or great earnestness; and "in the Spirit," using all these as prompted by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who ever helps our infirmities, and knowing our needs, intercedes for us.

And supplication for all saints. In our prayer, we are not to be occupied alone with ourselves and our own needs, but remembering and maintaining our unity with all the members of the body, we are by prayer to help one another. What a wide field is here for the exercise of prayer.

And for me. Strong as was Paul in the use of the armor of God, he never ceased to feel the need, or believe

in the efficacy of the prayers of others. How often does he ask those to whom he writes, to help him by their prayers. It was no mere form of words with him when he said, "pray for me." So fully does he believe in the power of their prayer, that he specifies the things they are to ask for.

That utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth. The word for "utterance" here is usually rendered "word." He asks them to pray that whenever he opens his mouth to speak, the word may be given him, so that he may *make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel . . . that therein I may speak as boldly as I ought to speak.* Paul believed that unless the Lord put the right words in his mouth when he opened it to speak, he should never be able to speak as he ought, and that the desired result would come in answer to their prayers for him. If this was so with Paul the mighty apostle, how much more do ministers and evangelists and teachers and personal workers need the prayers of Christians, that they may speak the right words in the right manner? Few suspect how much such prayers have to do with the effectiveness of the preacher's words, or how much is lost for the lack of them. Pray for the preacher, that the words he speaks may be God's message; that he may be the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, and not utter simply his own thoughts and opinions.

4. Closing Words (vs. 21-24).

His letter is now complete. It only remains for him to speak a few personal words, and give his benediction. What tenderness does he show in these closing words. He realizes how anxious they will be to know

how he is faring in Rome, and especially as they had heard that he was in prison. Many in his condition would have much to say in a letter, about his life in prison; but Paul barely alludes to it once or twice. He says: *That you may know my affairs and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known unto you all things.* Tychicus was the one by whom the letter was sent to them, and Paul says that he sent him *for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.* We should expect the Christians in Asia would be the ones to send a messenger to comfort Paul in prison. But instead, he is sending a beloved brother and companion all the way to Asia to comfort their hearts in their anxiety about him. So he was ever thinking, not of his own, but of others' welfare and comfort.

Then for the last word of peace and love and faith, and a prayer that these might be the gift *from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* So the epistle closes with that name, "which is above every name," and to the believer, the sweetest name that ever was uttered by tongue of men or angels.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.—Amen.